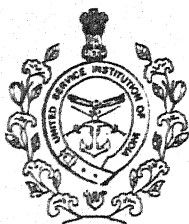


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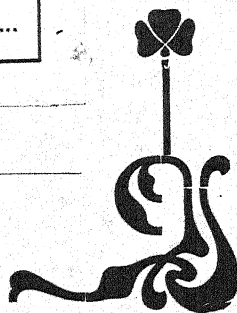
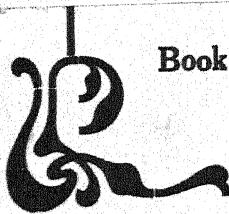
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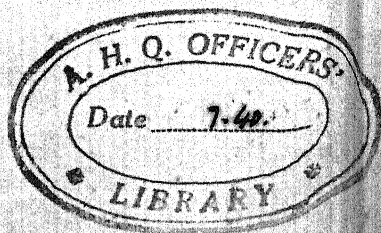
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# WHY WE FIGHT



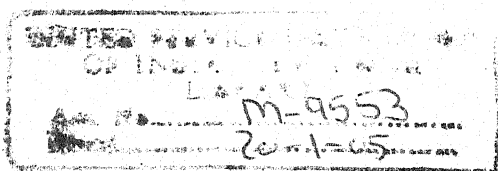
# WHY WE FIGHT

Labour's Case

By

The Rt. Hon.

ARTHUR GREENWOOD, M.P.



London

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LTD.  
Broadway House: 68-74 Carter Lane, E.C.



First published 1940

35542  
G96  
18227

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
AT GAINSBOROUGH PRESS, ST. ALBANS,  
BY FISHER, KNIGHT AND CO., LTD.

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## PREFACE

THIS book is intended to set forth the reasons why organised Labour in this country and elsewhere is immersed in the present struggle. These reasons may not commend themselves to all, but they represent the background of events and circumstances which colour the mind of Labour. The case is one which is also a case for a new world *after* the war as the embodiment of the hopes *of* the war.

I have no doubt that some readers may challenge the wisdom of the criticisms I make of the existing order. Timid spirits will say that it will be used against us in German propaganda. My answer is a simple one. The enemy wireless and Press will misrepresent us in any event. Moreover, it does not serve the cause of truth to parade perfection which does not exist. I know that things are not as they should be. But to put them right we must keep what we have won. They are the milestones along the road which we have still to tread. It is because organised Labour means to continue its march to freedom, that it knows it must pass through the valley of the shadow of death.



## PREFACE

Let German propaganda do its worst. The results of the war will not be settled by wild and irresponsible words and malevolent misrepresentation, but by steadfastness on the part of those who, secure in past achievements, know that they stand upon the rock on which a finer future will be built.

This book is written frankly and sincerely from the Labour point of view. But I hope it will be a contribution to the nation's case.

ARTHUR GREENWOOD.

# WHY WE FIGHT



## PART I

### LABOUR HATES WAR

LABOUR hates war, not merely because of its stupidity, its barbarity and cruel waste of life, and its colossal wastage of common resources, but also because war is in direct conflict with the basic principles of organised Labour.

War is competition and rivalry in their worst forms. Labour's dream is of a co-operative nation and a co-operative world. There can be no effectively Socialist world whilst mankind lives under the clouds of war. The very conditions which create the possibility of armed struggle are inimical to the growth of Socialist principles, and they divert the minds of men to the destructive purposes of war from the constructive and co-operative tasks of peace.

Moreover, war is an attempt to settle differences by brute force. The Labour Movement does not believe that superior force is necessarily any indication of righteousness. It has itself had to face superior force. It has time and again been beaten ; but subsequently its case has



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been accepted. When the workers fought the challenge of a hard-hearted, callous individualism engaged on building up the capitalist system, they were browbeaten into temporary submission. Subsequently, however, the claims of human justice were in part met in spite of the bitter opposition of powerful industrial forces, because reason and humanitarian feeling prevailed. Elsewhere I deal with the achievements won by Labour in the industrial field, in spite of self-interest, prejudice and unreason.

The British Labour Movement, which took the full shock of the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution a century and a half ago, devised first the Trade Union Movement, and then the Co-operative Movement, to meet the menace of industrial slavery. A century ago the Chartist Movement raised the flag of political freedom. Out of the travail of the British workers was born organised endeavour to build defences against those who used their economic power to prey upon and subdue the masses.

British Labour has made a great contribution to the world. It brought to the workers of the nations weapons with which they could withstand the attempts of capitalist interests to crush or deny the human rights of the many for the material benefit of the relatively few. Those weapons were trade unionism and the Co-

## LABOUR HATES WAR

operative Movement, institutions democratic in spirit, method and organisation.

Their intention in the first instance was defensive. But, in the course of time, democratic institutions being inherently dynamic and constructive in character, they gradually became an organic part of the national life. Modern Britain without the organised manifestations of working class life—trade unionism, co-operation, the working men's club movement, the Workers' Educational Association, and other similar activities, is just unthinkable. Their basis is reason, discussion and negotiation. During the course of a century, they have contributed powerfully to the progress of the working classes, partly by their own direct efforts and partly by the gradual modification or conversion of public opinion.

Labour entered the arena of politics. At first it was associated with the Liberal Party, but it was soon realised that "working-class" interests were overwhelmingly national in character, and that the call of the disinherited for a place in the sun demanded a policy which ran counter to the individualist traditions of the Liberal Party.

The Conservative and Liberal Parties each worked within the ambit of the capitalist system in fundamental agreement, but with a different political emphasis. The former, speaking the

voice of the aristocratic and landed interests, but with a feeling of sympathy for the "lower orders", promoted legislation for the protection of factory and mineworkers, and showed an interest in social reform. The Liberal Party, fanatically individualist in its earlier days, spoke for the new industrialists. Its exponents, as Conservatives have pointed out, were harsh in their attitude towards the victims of the Industrial Revolution, but the Liberals fought the landlords, and pressed for free trade, it has been cynically argued, in order that the farmers and landlords might be penalised so as to provide cheap food for the slaves of industry. The Liberals were constitutional reformers, desirous of extending the franchise, of giving the "little man" a chance, and of protecting individual liberty.

Both the orthodox political parties, as I have already said, responded to growing humanitarian sentiment and public pressure. Each of them can claim achievements in the sphere of social and economic amelioration. Each of them, as time has gone by, broke here and there through the defences of the capitalist system for which they were responsible and which they supported.

It was not, for example, the Socialist "agitators" who established municipal socialism. It

## LABOUR HATES WAR

was hard-headed Liberals and Tories who did it on the ground that it was good business. Joseph Chamberlain, a great Imperialist, was also a great municipal administrator. His son, the present Prime Minister, sponsored an Act which established a municipal bank in Birmingham.

Liberals and Conservatives alike have rightly responded to the requirements of a changing world, though they have done it cautiously and reluctantly. It was a Liberal Government before the last Great War which established the principle of the social provision of pensions for the aged. It was a Conservative Government some years after the war which set up the Central Electricity Board, and established a semi-socialist form of control.

But notwithstanding the inevitable movement of the Liberal and Conservative Parties towards the left, organised Labour felt that it must express its voice independently. So that in 1900 a Conference called in London by the Trades Union Congress brought into being the Labour Representation Committee with a Socialist policy.

Organised Labour realised that the fulfilment of Democracy, the roots of which it had strengthened, could not be realised either by Liberalism or Conservatism, but only by a policy which carried into the realm of social and economic



relations, the principles of equality which our political system was struggling to achieve.

Therefore Labour was born as an independent political force. It had no daily papers to advocate its cause. It had no financial resources. But it was unafraid. Its leading spirits were Nonconformists. They were Puritans, with the spirit of Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides. Just as they were pillars of the chapels, they became by their moral courage pillars of strength to Labour's political movement.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming odds against it—the entrenched position of the older political parties with their far-reaching influence in every ramification of the national life, and the prejudice against a political movement springing from the heart of the people, and led by men of humble origin—the Labour Party made headway.

Its Members grew in the House of Commons after successive General Elections. Its adherents in the country multiplied. It gained increased courage with new strength. It was bold enough during the last Great War to declare its war aims—a declaration which can be read to-day, and stand the test of the passage of time and the change of circumstances. Twice it has been in office—a possibility which the pioneers regarded as doubtful in their lifetimes.

## LABOUR HATES WAR

The Labour Party, in the House of Commons and on our local authorities, has been a growing influence in the nation's life and activities. To-day its opponents recognise its power.

It has fought its way against ignorance, prejudice, misrepresentation and vested interests. It has succeeded in winning the goodwill of millions of people. It stands to-day as it has always stood, for the downtrodden and the oppressed, for the fulfilment of democratic ideals, so that individuals and nations alike may live their lives in freedom.

There has been in the past much talk about the "class war", or, more accurately translated from the German of Karl Marx, "the class struggle". This struggle is not a theory but a fact, burnt into the minds of the organised workers because of the exploitation which they have suffered. The object of Labour is not the perpetuation of classes, but their abolition, and the establishment of a classless society. This does not mean that it believes that all men and women are of equal stature, equal ability, equal spiritual power. It means that in order to develop human powers to the full there must be equality of opportunity for all. Social usefulness does not depend on the possession of wealth or the enjoyment of social privileges ; it is dependent upon native human quality and its training.

The Labour Movement, concerned primarily with human well-being, realises that the welfare of mankind is not the responsibility of an individual or an oligarchy or a class. Freedom and the happiness that comes with freedom is the task of all, each bringing his own contribution in thought, service and spirit, and each sharing in the material, intellectual and spiritual advantages which accrue from the co-operative effort.

To British Labour, the very foundation of life is freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of action, short of that licence which threatens the public good.

We have made mistakes, as any body of people thinking out complex and difficult problems must do. We have been unpopular, as any minority struggling to become a majority must inevitably be. We have been misunderstood, because, as a Movement challenging the existing order, we are suspected and, indeed, hated.

But, whatever our mistakes, whatever our shortcomings, whatever opposition our progress may have engendered, British Labour, organised industrially and politically, is a great national force, and, in the last resort, the bulwark of the country against tyranny and oppression.

I have tried to indicate in broad outline the forces which brought the British working-class movement into being. I have tried to show the

## LABOUR HATES WAR

spirit which has animated it and the power it exercises.

But its interests are not confined to Britain's shores. It is deeply interested in the British Commonwealth of Nations—that free Confederation which no Totalitarian Power could hold together against its will. Its unity is the unity of a common purpose. British Labour has watched with pride and in a spirit of comradeship the growth of Labour Movements in the Dominions. It has witnessed the economic advance which Labour has made, for example, in Australia. It treasures the achievements of the Labour Government in New Zealand. It welcomes, as it knew would be the case, the whole-hearted support the Dominions have given to the war against Dictatorship.

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Labour has for many years had contacts with the Indian people. It sympathises with them in their struggle against British and princely domination, and in the subjection of the masses to landlords and industrialists. What the British people claim for themselves—to determine their own destiny—is the right of every people, however great the difficulties of fulfilment may be.

As regards the Colonies, Labour emphatically repudiates the views of those who in the less enlightened days of two centuries and more ago,

## WHY WE FIGHT

regarded these possessions as grasping landlords regard their broad acres, proper objects of exploitation.

Hitler's demand for Colonies shows the mentality of the eighteenth century. Many of his criticisms regarding the origins of the British Empire are undeniably true. Buccaneering, bloodshed, and suppression played their part. And in the light of modern conceptions of human and international relationships there is much in the history of the Empire of which we cannot be proud. But there is also much in its more recent history which has contributed to the growth of freedom and democracy.

In any event, the exploits of the Dutch, the Spanish, the French, and the British in the past, are no justification for German "colonisation" to-day. Colonies are not estates to be squeezed dry by their "owners". They are territories with resources which should be developed for the enrichment of the world as a whole. They are populated by men and women who are struggling against the same problems as the British working class. They are using the same methods as British workers employ—self-organisation.

The British Labour Party is anxious that everything possible should be done to assist the Colonies towards self-government and self-

## LABOUR HATES WAR

development of their resources for the common good.

But Labour casts its eye beyond the confines of the "Empire". Its vision is world-wide. It has an international outlook. It sees peoples struggling against powerful interests, political, racial, social and economic. It believes that it is only by removing the fundamental causes of war that real human progress can be made, and that the nations can be brought together for the constructive task of solving the common problems of mankind.

The Labour Movement was, therefore, a whole-hearted supporter of the League of Nations and the principles of collective security. During Labour's terms of office, it worked to uphold the authority of the League. The second Labour Government took the lead in bringing into being the Disarmament Conference. Labour deeply deplored the subsequent dissolution of the Conference, and the weakening of the League.

It still believes that the active co-operation of the states of the world is an essential to permanent peace. Though the League never became the powerful instrument which Labour envisaged, it did at least embody the idea of international co-operation. It is not without significance that the totalitarian states, inherently incapable of



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co-operation, left the League, to the service of which the democratic countries in Europe were pledged. Effective machinery for international discussion and decision is vital.

When this war is ended, the peace of the world will benefit by a world authority charged with this great purpose. But its primary duty will not be the settlement of disputes or the maintenance of an international police force to deter or quell the law-breaker, important though these may be. Its great objective will be to turn the eyes of the nations from matters of possible difference to the active and determined achievement of social and economic justice in the world, and the eternal friendship which grows out of justice.

British Labour's aim is one, whether we think of the homeland which nurtured us, of the British Commonwealth of Nations to which so many of our brothers and sisters have gone, or of mankind as a whole.

It is to end the "black-out" of misery everywhere ; to establish justice as a rock on which all men can stand and live ; to light a lantern of hope which all can see ; to clasp hands in true friendship across the seas and mountains, with all peoples, irrespective of race or creed.

In this war, it is clear, therefore, that everything Labour holds dear is at stake, whether

## LABOUR HATES WAR

from the point of view of our nation, of the Commonwealth, or of the world. We are faced with a challenge which must be met, if hard victories for liberty are to be kept, if our hopes are not to be destroyed, and if the future of human civilisation is to be safeguarded.

I opened this chapter with three simple words—Labour hates war. That is profoundly true. But it loves freedom even more than it hates the desolation of armed conflict. It would rather suffer than sacrifice the heroism of its comrades in the past and its hopes for the future.

I have called this book "Why We Fight". I have tried in this chapter to explain the reason. It is because democratic institutions and traditions are threatened, not with mere curtailment, but with complete destruction.

It is on those institutions and traditions that we hope to build a nobler edifice of freedom, of respect for human life and personality, and of human opportunity which will enrich our nation and the world.

These aims are the breath of life to the Labour Movement. We know only too well that the Dictator strikes first at working-class organisations.

As I said in the House of Commons, speaking for the Labour Party on September 2nd, 1939, the day before war was declared :

## WHY WE FIGHT

"On these benches, I think we know more than Members on the other side what a dictatorship victory would mean. I had many friends in the old Germany, up to 1933. I had many friends in Austria later than that. I had many friends in Czecho-Slovakia up to the middle of March this year.

"I know that the people who will feel to the fullest degree all that Nazism means here are the people for whom we speak, and we are clear, as I think has been shown to this House, that we must take all appropriate means to bring this war to a speedy and successful conclusion."

The Labour Movement has watched with aching heart the murder, incarceration and exile of its comrades abroad in Germany, in Austria, in Czecho-Slovakia, in Poland. British Labour, in association with organised Labour abroad, came to the succour of the victims. We have listened with growing anxiety to the advancing heavy tread of Hitlerism. We have known in our hearts that its paralysing influence was creeping nearer and nearer, and that sooner or later, because of its very nature, Hitlerism would try a fall with the great western democracies.

Since modern Dictatorship has raised its head in Europe, its onward march was not stayed until, following the final slaughter of Czecho-Slovakia, there was a threat to Poland. Herr

## LABOUR HATES WAR

Hitler was so accustomed to bloodless victories, through bloody defeats for his victims, that he believed there was no end to his progress towards complete mastery over the forces of democracy.

British Labour has steadfastly believed that, had the conscience of the world declared itself clearly and firmly when aggression was threatened, the aggressor would have flinched and failed to carry out his object. It believed that the power of the economic and financial boycott fully applied, could have deterred the aggressor. Neither of these powerful weapons was effectively used.

Hitler despised Britain and France for their pusillanimity. Advised by Ribbentrop, he was told that Britain was degenerate and effete, and that it would never fight. But Hitler's relentless pursuit of the policy laid down in *Mein Kampf* brought Europe nearer and nearer to the brink of war.

On the evening of the day Britain declared war, I spoke over the air in these words :

"Since 11 o'clock this morning we have been at war with Hitler. He has committed another crime of aggression. He has already trampled over Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Memel-land. At 5 o'clock last Friday morning, after having prepared the ground beforehand, he attacked Poland, which we had declared we would defend if she were the next victim of aggression.

## WHY WE FIGHT

"Until 11 o'clock this morning Poland stood alone, a brave and gallant people facing great odds, but determined to keep their liberty, and, by doing so, protect ours. All honour to the grit and determination of the Polish people ! Now we are with them in the great struggle, heart, body and soul.

"We are at war because the British people are united and steadfast in their conviction that there are cherished possessions of mankind which are worth defending, for without them life is empty.

"We believe in liberty, through which alone the mind and soul of the peoples of the world can find free expression.

"All peoples, whether they be great powers or small nations, have a right to live in security and independence, without threats or menaces or the use of force. During the past few years nations have been destroyed, and with them, liberty. With every new attack on independent peoples our own freedom is threatened. If we do not overthrow the forces of dictatorship now, our turn will come sooner or later.

"In order to stop for ever any further acts of aggression, and to protect both our own liberties and those of other peoples, we have decided to stand firm now, before the torrent of tyranny becomes too strong.

"We assert the right of all nations to live their own lives. We deny the right of any power to commit acts of brigandage or to seek to attain its ends by means of force or the threat of force. We believe that there is no kind of dispute between nations which cannot be settled by peaceful methods, if the will is present.

## LABOUR HATES WAR

"If Hitler had observed these principles, there would not have been war to-day. I have said in the House of Commons that he alone could cause war. In spite of repeated warnings and declarations, he has himself chosen to tread a path which will be strewn with dead and dying.

"We have in this country made mistakes in the past ; but all of us, whatever our views were, have hoped and prayed for peace. Our grave warnings, our determined declarations, our sincere appeals, have been unheeded.

"Hitler has made the war. With sadness, but with an iron will and an invincible spirit, we have joined issue. We shall live through anxious times. Enormous sacrifices will need to be made. But, with clear consciences, we shall know that we are fighting the last war for final peace and liberty—including the liberty of the German people themselves.

"This is a bitter hour for us all. It is a bitter hour for the Labour Party, which has always regarded peace with freedom as the greatest blessing of mankind.

"Those for whom I especially speak are fighting for a world in which henceforth law shall rule instead of force. We do not want increased power for Britain in the world. We want no new lands. We do not want to destroy the German people, whose scholars, writers, musicians, democratic leaders and others have made such noble contributions to that European civilisation which Hitler seeks to destroy.

"We want—having paid an incalculable price—when the air-raid sirens have been silenced and war is ended, to make a new start to build a world where

## WHY WE FIGHT

peace will be eternal and where the arts of peace may flourish for the enjoyment of the whole of mankind.

"In this task, we shall have behind us in spirit, if not in action, every peace-loving nation in Europe. In view of the high sentiments expressed by the President of the United States of America, we are assured of the moral support of the people of that great Republic. The whole of the British Commonwealth of Nations will rally round us. The conscience of the vast majority of the human race will sustain us."

In an Empire broadcast on September 20th, 1939, I said :

"We do not flinch from the declarations which we have made. We accept their implications. We know that we are now engaged in a titanic struggle, the result of which will determine the future of the world. Labour's heart and soul are in the fight to crush for ever the spirit of tyranny with all its barbarities.

"Labour stands four-square. It hates war, but it also hates oppression. It keeps itself free from bitterness and rancour, and I hope it always will. Its mind is not clouded by evil thoughts against the German people. It hopes to rescue them from subjection. Its heart goes out to those who are the victims of Hitler's persecution.

"Labour's purpose—having itself suffered in the past from oppression and persecution—is to end a system of terrorism which has destroyed the bodies and spirits of multitudes of the sons of men, and which seeks to enthrall all mankind."

That is "why we fight".



## PART II

### BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT STRUGGLE

#### I. THE RISE OF HITLERISM

THE rise of Hitler to power in Germany at the end of January, 1933, ushered in a new and tragic epoch, both for the German people and for the whole of Europe. It marked the beginning of the end of the peaceful and recuperative phase in international life which set in with the termination of the World War and the restoration of peace.

Few people understood at that time the real inner significance of the event. Fewer still discerned in it the vast dangers and terrible consequences of which it was the unmistakable warning. Even in Germany itself, the Hitler Movement was not treated seriously until it was almost too late to ward off the encroaching menace. The twin pillars upon which Hitler was raised to power were the reactionary industrialists and landowners on the one hand, and the military nationalist clique on the other. But his triumph was facilitated by the mistakes

of the Socialists, the tactics of the Communists, and the weakness of the bourgeois Republican elements who still constituted a clear majority of the German people even at the very moment when Hitler became Chancellor.

Democracy and Freedom in Europe suffered their second major post-War disaster. The Democratic Republic of Germany was quickly relegated to the scrap-book of history. Democracy in Britain and France, which had successfully withstood the disruptive propaganda assaults of the Communist International, was soon to find itself confronted by a new sinister, unscrupulous and powerful force—a force that ranged itself against vital enlightened and civilising influences in national and international life. It was a force which, as it gathered power and momentum, was to ravage large tracts of territory in Europe and bring vast populations of non-German peoples within its evil grip. To plunge Europe into another great war in furtherance of its insatiable ambition for expansion and domination was to be its crowning infamy.

Germany had entered the World War of 1914-18 as the most formidable military empire in history. Her real rulers were a vain, weak and opinionated Kaiser, and a ruthless, efficient and all-powerful military clique. The spirit of Pan-Germanism was allied to an almost irrational

## BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

faith in the military might of a vigorous, energetic and self-confident race, whose ruling classes had been trained to believe in its own superiority and was imbued with a faith that it was the destiny of Germany to dominate the world. How nearly that confidence in its military power was justified, and the struggle for world domination carried through to success, is the history of the Great War, in which only after over four years of titanic effort and the marshalling of the resources of half the world against her did Germany collapse in defeat.

Defeat was bitter and humiliating to the Prussian mentality. "Our request for an Armistice," wrote Prince Max von Baden, the last Chancellor of the Empire, "has been a deadly blow to the sense of honour of many millions of Germans."

How far-reaching were the consequences of her defeat is shown by the fact that Germany entered the war as a proud and lustful military Empire under a Kaiser, and came out of it a Democratic Republic with a Socialist as Chancellor.

How fatal had been Germany's attempt at world domination was shown by the complete demoralisation and disintegration of her Army; the chaos which the dissolution of her internal system produced; the acceptance of Armistice

terms which were the measure of her utter inability to continue any sort of military resistance ; and the imposition of Peace terms which were intended to rid Europe of the danger of German militarism for all time, and to render Germany incapable of resuming her ambitious plans for world domination.

Though the birth of the Republic was the occasion of spiritual release and uplift for the masses, and brought with it the promise of new freedom, the nation was plunged in conditions of intolerable poverty, insufficiency, misery and distress—the outward manifestations of the economic collapse which had been caused by the war. Germany's economic life was disastrously dislocated. Her foreign trade was non-existent. She was loaded with war debt. Her population was seriously under-nourished and in a condition of extreme want verging on famine. We have been told that, a month before the war ended, "the misery in the towns was indescribable—no coal, no adequate clothing, a ceaseless hunger". Another observer said there was no meat, potatoes could not be delivered because of transport shortage, and fat was absolutely unobtainable. "The want is so great," said Scheidemann, the Majority Socialist leader, "that it is to me just a riddle what North Berlin and East Berlin live on."

## BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

In conditions of political chaos, economic dislocation and acute social distress brought about by the stress of war and the strain of defeat, the affairs of the State passed into the control of German Social Democracy. Its leaders were content with the political revolution that had been carried through successfully; they had no desire for a social revolution on the pattern of the eastern neighbour. They resolutely resisted those who wanted to go "too far and too fast". This led, at the very outset, to a breach with the Independent Socialists—a breach which was to have an unhappy influence upon the fortunes of the Republic at a later stage.

It is doubtful whether the Social Democratic leaders realised either the extent of their power or the scope of their opportunity, though they were under no illusions as to the formidable character of the problems which confronted them. There can be no gainsaying the fact that they entered upon their impressive task with the solid backing of the bulk of the people.

The soldiers released from the harsh discipline of the army and the rigours of war, the industrial workers released from the severe control to which they had been subjected at home, the women released from the nightmare of war and want and all the fears that it had entailed; all

looked forward with eagerness to a peaceful and happier future under the new dispensation of the Democratic Republic.

And, despite the enormous internal difficulties and the complete external weakness which were the legacy left by the former régime, the basis of a vastly improved social life for the masses was steadily laid. The eight-hour day became a reality. Trade Union membership rapidly increased. The organised workers became a real power in the State. Adult suffrage was achieved, and women for the first time enjoyed full rights of free citizenship. There was no longer conscription ; the youth of the nation were liberated from a system which had sapped their independence and imposed a hated servility under the Imperial military régime. A harvest of social improvement began to be reaped. Social legislation developed in every direction. Social institutions were established whose beneficent activities promoted the well-being of the German citizen from the cradle to the grave. The health, housing and insurance services were monuments of social enterprise and social care, of which the Democratic Republic had every reason to be proud. Similar triumphs were recorded in the cultural field, while the educational system was reorganised. In these and other directions German Social Democracy

## BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

justified the hopes of the masses by its plans and policies.

But in other directions it was lacking both in vision and moral courage, and deprived itself of the full fruits of its efforts. Key positions in the structure of the Republic were allowed to be retained to a dangerous extent by persons who were either bitter enemies, or at best only lukewarm friends.

"What can be said," asks Edgar Mowrer, in his *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, "for a Republic that allows its laws to be interpreted by Monarchist judges, its Government to be administered by old-time functionaries brought up in fidelity to the old régime, that watches passively while reactionary school-teachers and professors teach its children to despise the present freedom in favour of a glorified feudal past, that permits and encourages the revival of the militarism that was chiefly responsible for the country's previous humiliations."

The power and control of the industrialists, the financiers and the military clique, though temporarily checked, remained. These reactionary elements hated the Republic. They hated a democratic system in which the power was in the hands of the people. They longed for the "good old days" of Imperial rule. Cloaking their hostility, they were ready to bide their



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opportunity, and, meanwhile, to take advantage of every difficulty, every fluctuation in the developing situation, and the burdensome effects of Reparation Payments upon an impoverished nation, to strengthen their grip and to advance their special interests.

Enormous power was steadily accumulated into the hands of capitalist financiers of the Stinnes type, by their business manipulations and trustification of industry. "Big business" was insatiable in its demands for State credits, while the landowners thrived on tariffs and subsidies, without making agriculture efficient or self-supporting, or providing any real benefit for the peasants. A severe shock was administered to the stability of the struggling Republic, first by the great inflation and later by the drastic deflation, both of which inflicted terrible misery and hardships upon the masses, and were used as new opportunities for large-scale profiteering by the rapacious industrialists.

It was the bitter experiences of those years which provided the soil of social crisis into which the roots of reaction and counter-revolution were sunk and from which they drew their nourishment. The Social Democrats were thrown on the defensive, and concession after concession was forced from them under the stress of worsening circumstances. The systematic undermining

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of the social and political achievements was carried on. Peter and Irma Petroff state in their book *The Secret of Hitler's Victory* that "The eight-hours day was sacrificed, the social welfare services were depleted, the various benefits were cut down, the wages reduced. Meanwhile expenditure on armaments, tariffs and indirect taxation increased, while the capitalists succeeded by means of a wage tax in making even the payment of direct taxation a privilege of the working class."

The Social Democrats struggled to maintain themselves in power against all the influences that were arrayed against them. The result was that they had to carry the blame for all the ills that Germany had suffered during those early post-war years. "In the eyes of the people," the same authors declare, "all the responsibility for the large capitalist and great landowners' policies, for Versailles and its consequences, for the Reichswehr and its secret rearming, for the social and cultural depletion, for the corruption and mass misery, finally even for the crisis, fell upon them."

The period of the great inflation had begun the eclipse of Social Democracy's rule. Within three years a Government which openly represented the interests of big business was installed under Chancellor Cuno. Though Cuno himself

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was soon ousted by popular indignation, the power of "big business" remained. Foreign loans poured into Germany, and a wave of prosperity washed across the nation. But the new prosperity was dangerous and illusory, because it was based not on expanding national wealth flowing from increased national production and a growing efficiency and stability of the national economy, but on large-scale borrowings from other countries.

So great were these credits from abroad that they exceeded the total amount paid by Germany in the form of reparations. The masses were content, because their wages and conditions began to improve and they hoped they had finally left behind the deep-seated and widespread misery and degradation which had formed so large a part of their experience in earlier years.

But signs of the disastrous economic crisis which was soon to overtake the world began to show themselves. The crisis fell upon Germany with shattering effect. Its consequences were more desperately severe in Germany than in any other country. Rationalisation had been carried much further than in any other industrial country. Social conditions had become unbearable. There was extreme poverty and a low standard of life. The State Social Services

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were seriously impaired, largely by the tax evasion of the rich, who succeeded in escaping much of their responsibility by every conceivable method of financial jugglery. The Municipal Social Services, which were a second buttress of social defence for the unemployed and low paid workers, were deprived by the Brüning Government of important sources of revenue.

The reactionaries sabotaged all efforts to ward off or minimise the perils which threatened the State. The crisis provided them with the opportunity for which they had been waiting. The Hitler Movement, which had been vainly struggling for years to attract the masses, began to make dangerously rapid headway.

Here was an organised force, strong and growing, in the hands of an ambitious and scheming "ex-Corporal", which might be used by the privileged elements and the vested interests to bring about the downfall of the democratic régime and restore power to the old "governing classes". They would use Hitler for their own ends, and, when these had been accomplished, they would kick him back to his proper place.

And so important sections of the military caste covertly assured Hitler of their support. Big industrialists, money barons, and powerful

landowners became secret paymasters. Vast financial resources poured into Hitler's coffers. An immense brown-shirted private army was formed. Vast publicity machinery required for extensive propaganda campaigns and increasing agitation came into operation.

Masses of the lower middle classes who had been reduced to beggary by the great Inflation, of peasants whose lot had remained one of poverty and harsh conditions, and of young people whose outlook on life had become one of frustration and discontent, flocked into his ranks.

The organised workers within the factories, who were steeped in the spirit of trade unionism and Social Democracy, remained unaffected by the disintegrating poison of the Nazis. The unemployed, whose conditions had been made bearable by the social protection which the Democratic Republic provided both through the State and the Municipalities, also remained largely loyal.

But, whereas all the hostile elements were co-operating in at least the common aim of destroying the power of German democracy and its popular institutions, those who should have proved themselves the ardent and determined custodians of the Republic displayed too little sense of appreciation of the strength and cunning

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of the sinister forces arrayed in opposition. Had the Social Democrats, the Communists and the Liberal democratic parties been able to work in effective co-operation, and combine all their considerable and still decisive power and resources, it is doubtful whether the counter-revolution would have won through to success.

One must recognise that many influences and events, both internal and external, had hampered and harassed and weakened the young German Parliamentary democracy throughout its fourteen years of struggling existence.

But there were also causes for which the Left parties themselves were responsible. Chief among the offences which can be charged against the Left during the later years, and perhaps the decisive factor in the Republic's collapse, was the refusal of the Communists to realise that the fight against Fascism, if they were sincere, could only be successfully conducted in Germany by preserving and defending Parliamentary democracy as the instrument of the rights and liberties of the people.

When the last democratic Government, with a Socialist Chancellor, came to an end in 1930, the Nazis secured nearly six and a half million votes and 107 seats in the Reichstag. Two years later they mustered one-third of the votes cast. In 1933 Hitler became Chancellor.

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The Democratic Republic was dead. Reaction had triumphed.

### 2. "BIG LIE" PROPAGANDA

Hitler and Hitlerism have been ascribed to the "iniquitous Versailles Treaty". This is an over-simplification of the "causes", and it contains all the errors of exaggeration and omission to which over-simplification is prone. It is, of course, true that Hitler used the Treaty to provide the Nazi Movement with a major section of its denunciatory propaganda, but the suggestion that it was the decisive or main factor will not bear examination.

Hitler himself has admitted in *Mein Kampf* that the mass of the German people was indifferent to the Treaty of Versailles and to German disarmament, and that its resentment had to be worked up by "ingenious propaganda".

Mr. Robert Dell, the well-informed foreign correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, wrote on October 7th, 1939 :

"The method of 'ingenious propaganda' by which he worked it (popular resentment) up was the lie that Germany had been victorious in the war and that the fruits of victory had been snatched from her by 'Marxist treason'. So long as the Germans believed that they had been beaten they remained pacific. Desire for revenge did not create the Nazi Movement—it was created by it."



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The Versailles Treaty was minted into a flood of propaganda currency by the most passionate and unscrupulous publicist of the post-War era. It was capable of being used as an effective weapon to prick the consciences of the Allied peoples. It was a ready-made dagger to be driven into the heart of German Social Democracy, which had been saddled by circumstances with the responsibility for accepting the Treaty consequences of the criminal work of Germany's late Imperial masters.

No one will deny that the Treaty fell far short, in vital respects, of the ideal peace, the "Wilson" peace, for which the democratic peoples had struggled and sacrificed so much. Still less was it the sort of peace which the International Labour and Socialist Movement had striven to secure. British Labour refused to accept any measure of responsibility for it, and proceeded at once to devote its attention to expounding the case for revision. We recognised that within it were to be found undeniable violations of the principles of justice and equity, and that it contained seeds of immediate grievances and future dangers which the lessons of history and the compulsion of commonsense should have warned the Treaty-makers to exclude.

In particular, the imposition of excessive and unspecified reparation demands upon a people

prostrated by the war and starved by blockade was both wrongful and unwise, and calculated to feed the bitterness and intensify the sense of injustice evoked by the cruel effects upon the famished population—and especially on the babies and children—of the continuance of the blockade for eight months after the Armistice. Under this head the German people had ground for deep resentment against the Allies.

But, when we come to consider the question of territorial changes, there is far less justification for the German accusation of injustice. German territorial integrity was left substantially intact. The restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, of Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, and the creation of an independent Poland, were acts of restitution and justice. The dissolution of the ramshackle Austro-Hungarian Empire had become almost an accomplished fact with the Hapsburgs' military collapse, and the Treaty-makers were called upon to do little more than to recognise, ratify and give precise form to changes that had either already taken place or were ripe for completion. The Sudeten German territories of Czechoslovakia were not torn from Germany—they did not belong to Germany—but were divorced from Austria, and in those territories Germans and Czechs had lived together within the traditional boundaries of the ancient Kingdom

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of Bohemia for eight hundred years. As for truncated Austria, injustice lay less in the refusal to agree to an *Anschluss* with Germany, than in the failure to provide for an economic linking-up of the Succession and other Danubian States.

The restoration of Poland was specifically provided for by President Wilson's Thirteenth Point, which stated that an "independent Polish State should be erected, which should include territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured of free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant".

In view of its predominantly Polish population, the inclusion of the so-called Corridor was an attempt to meet a reasonable need of the new Polish State, while the establishment of Danzig as an international free city, to provide secure access to the sea, was not an arrangement that merited the savage denunciation which Hitler years later employed to cloak his aggressive designs against Poland. When commenting on the Fourteen Points in 1918, Prince Max von Baden said that: "For Germany the least pleasant sound was that of Point Thirteen which concerned Poland, and in which access to the sea was demanded." "Still," he continued,

"the wording was susceptible of the interpretation that Danzig should be made a free city."

This recasting of the map of Europe by the Versailles Treaty was carried through, largely in accordance with the principle of nationality ; but, inevitably, it produced, or rather left, the problem of minorities, though on a considerably smaller scale than had been the case previously. It did, however, provide that the rights of minorities should be definitely safeguarded, by charging the newly-constituted League of Nations with a certain measure of responsibility for them.

The disarmament of Germany was neither an injustice nor an outrage. Nor did the German masses regard it in this light. They were only too anxious to be free from the militarist power which had held them so tightly in its evil grip, and had brought the nation to such a bitter pass. Disarmament meant freedom from the enormous burden of expenditure, and the diversion of national resources to the rebuilding of the shattered social and economic fabric of Germany. No sane nation would prefer crushing national armaments to disarmament, provided all nations disarm.

Where Germany was entitled to complain was that the Allies did not redeem their pledge to disarm to a common level, but contented themselves with reducing their national forces

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well below the high peak at which they stood when the war ended. The Allied nations themselves had far greater justification for complaint against their Governments for failing to ensure effective and drastic general disarmament, because freedom from war and freedom from the menace and burden of competing national armaments was a deep and persistent hope.

What was an unpardonable blunder, both from Germany's standpoint and that of the world, was the imposition upon Germany of a limited professional long-term Reichswehr, which, instead of providing the young Republic with a people's instrument for the defence of their newly-won democratic rights, placed in the hands of officers belonging to the Imperial military class the legal opportunity to restore their shattered power and recover their special privileges. The erstwhile Imperial officers cleverly disguised their intentions, but they deliberately set about laying well and truly the foundations upon which, in due course, the military might of a reactionary Germany could be raised. Instead of ensuring a defence force that was drawn from the democratic masses, inspired by the knowledge that they were the defenders of the people's rights and of the people's Republic, and led by officers of proven fidelity to German democracy, the Treaty left the acorn of militarism in the soil of Germany

to be secretly nurtured until it had become the full-grown tree again.

But, whatever charges may be levelled against the Versailles Treaty—and no one has directed franker criticism against unjust provisions than did the British Labour Movement—it is a “good” treaty by comparison with the rapacious treaty of Brest-Litovsk which a triumphant Germany inflicted on a defeated and revolutionary Russia.

By that treaty Russia lost 56 million inhabitants (almost one-third of her population), one-third of her agricultural land, one-third of her railways, nearly three-quarters of her iron, almost 90 per cent of her coal, 85 per cent of her sugar beet, 54 per cent of her industrial undertakings, and later, by the supplementary treaty of Berlin, was compelled to pay an indemnity of 6,000,000,000 marks, say, £300,000,000 sterling.

What, then, would have been the peace if Germany had won the war? It would have been a “strong German peace” giving her “world domination”, greatly expanding her territorial possessions, perpetuating the enslavement of peoples who secured their freedom at Versailles, and establishing her as a permanent menace to the security of neighbouring States which for the moment were not brought directly under her sway. While the probability, or rather the certainty, of such an outrageous peace by

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dictation at the hands of the victorious militarist Germany does not excuse such provisions of the Versailles Treaty as were either unjust or unwise or both, it ill became Hitler and his cynical and reactionary associates to adopt the martyr's role, and to scream in terms of righteous indignation.

Moreover, long before Hitler seized power, much had been done in the direction of Treaty revision. Legitimate grievances had been remedied, or were in process of being righted. In 1925 a valuable step was taken to allay the mutual fears of France and Germany by the Treaty of Locarno, which provided that, if either attacked the other, the victim of aggression would be defended by the other signatories. This treaty was signed by Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium. Reparation claims had been scaled down, and a final scheme of settlement negotiated. In 1926 Germany became a full member of the League with a permanent seat on the Council, and early in 1927 was given a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission. In January 1927, the Inter-Allied Commission of Control was withdrawn from Germany.

By Christmas 1929 the Allied Armies of Occupation had been withdrawn from the Rhineland — six years ahead of the time stipulated in the Treaty. At the World Disarmament Conference, in 1932, the German claim to equality

and the French claim to security were recognised and reconciled in an agreed formula which provided for "equality of rights within a régime of security".

It is merely a truism to say that the evil consequences of war do not end when conflict ceases. All that even a just treaty could at best be expected to do would be to mitigate their severity, and perhaps shorten their term of operation. Much depends on the spirit which animates the nations in the years that immediately follow the war. Peace is less a matter of treaty provisions than of the spirit and manner and method of their interpretation and operation.

It cannot be denied that the British and French Governments during the years following the war would have been far wiser to have adopted a more considerate and generous attitude to democratic Germany, to have been less stringent regarding some of their legal rights, and to have avoided doing serious injury to the tender plant of reconciliation and reviving confidence, such as was caused particularly by the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. It is more generally realised now how this treatment weakened the democratic authorities, and produced reactions which lent themselves to unscrupulous exploitation by sinister internal forces within Germany.



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Hitler made the fullest use of all real and imaginary grievances arising out of the Treaty itself and its operation, to stimulate passion and prejudice and ill-feeling by his unceasing "ingenious propaganda".

In her book *What Hitler Wants*, the author, E. O. Lorimer, tells us that the new Nazi Movement decided in 1920 to hold a weekly meeting, at which a great variety of subjects were handled : "The war guilt question, to which previously the general public had been indifferent ; the peace treaties, etc. Finding that, when he spoke of Versailles, his opponents were wont to shout, 'What about Brest-Litovsk ?' Hitler changed his text to 'The Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Versailles'."

Let Hitler speak for himself :

"I placed the two treaties side by side," he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, "compared them point by point, showed the positively boundless humanity of the one in contrast to the inhuman cruelty of the other. In those days I spoke on the subject to audiences of two thousand, at which I was often exposed to the gaze of 3,600 hostile eyes. And three hours later I had before me a surging mass filled with righteous indignation and boundless wrath."

Persistent use was made of the "Stab in the Back" doctrine by Hitler in his "ingenious

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propaganda". This doctrine is sheer invention. It has no basis in historical fact. Ample evidence of its falsity could be provided. Let it suffice to quote the following letter, written on October 3rd, 1918, by Field-Marshal Von Hindenburg, and sent to the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden :

"The Supreme Command insists on its demand of Sunday, 29th September, that a peace offer be issued to our enemies at once.

"As a result of the collapse of the Macedonian front and the weakening of our Western resources which this has brought about, and now that it is impossible to make good the very considerable losses which have been incurred in the battles of the last few days, there is, so far as can be foreseen, no longer a prospect of forcing peace on the enemy.

"The enemy, on the other hand, is continually bringing up new and fresh reserves into the battle.

"The German Army still stands firm, and successfully wards off all attacks. But the situation becomes daily more critical, and may force the Supreme Command to take momentous decisions. It is desirable in the circumstances to break off the battle, in order to spare the German people and its allies useless sacrifices. Every day wasted costs thousands of brave soldiers their lives."

One stands aghast at the amazing effrontery and utter dishonesty of a man whose value of the

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sense of truth is so warped that he could assert with pride his conclusion that "the skilful and unremitting use of propaganda can persuade people to believe that heaven is hell, or conversely that the most miserable existence is Paradise," and that "a definite factor in getting a lie believed is the size of the lie . . . for the broad mass of the people, in the primitive simplicity of its heart, more readily falls victim to a big lie than to a small one."

Hindenburg, in defeat, displayed a direct and fearless honesty, which is as alien to Hitler the dictator, as it was to Hitler the propagandist. The "Stab in the Back" doctrine was a foul insult both to the German soldiers, who won the admiration of the world for their fighting qualities, and to the German population, whose endurance and sacrifice in support of their soldiers reached the heroic. It was not till over a month later that revolutionary upheaval broke out in Germany, and even then it might have been averted had not the Kaiser and his military advisers displayed in defeat even greater blindness, obstinacy and stupidity in face of irresistible movements of public opinion. History is full of warnings against rulers being counselled by obstinate pride to stand athwart the path of the most imperative needs of their peoples.

### 3. DICTATORSHIP AND TERROR

Hitler's first task, when he became Chancellor was to consolidate and extend his powers in order to give the Nazi Party sole and undisputed control of the destinies of Germany. To achieve this it was essential to smash his enemies and to disabuse the minds of his allies of the thought that they could be his masters. He proceeded remorselessly and ruthlessly to achieve the former aim, while at the same time, by a mixture of adroitness and cunning, he brought the latter to heel.

The first Ministry of which he was the head was a coalition of Nazis and Nationalists. This alliance he maintained so long as it served his immediate purpose. During 1933 he destroyed all the elements upon which the Republic had rested—the Social Democratic Party, the Communist Party, and the Catholic Centre Party. Later on, the Nationalist Party was dissolved. The prohibition of any political party other than the Nazi Party, and the ruthless enforcement of this veto, made Hitler, as head of the Nazi Party, sole repository of political power in Germany.

Political monopoly was the real basis of the Hitler dictatorship, and terror became its most effective instrument. Democratic Parliamentaryism was uprooted. Political discussion and

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criticism, freedom of speech and of the Press, the industrial rights of the workers and the liberties of the subject, were thrown on the junk-heap of discarded ideas and worthless practices. The free men gave place to the "Yes-men".

All this constituted a smashing blow against German democracy, and, the workers organised politically and industrially. The German Social Democratic Party, for example, owned vast properties and issued hundreds of party newspapers, magazines, journals, and other publications, for propaganda, educational and information purposes. Its active membership exceeded 1,000,000 men and women. Its supporters throughout the country totalled several million electors. Its party machinery through which the political, social, cultural and recreational activities of the members were organised and directed was a closely-knit network covering the whole country.

All this vast accumulation of human association and material resources, which represented the spirit and life of German Social Democracy, and the organisation and agencies through which it found active play and practical expression was either suppressed, destroyed or confiscated. Its leaders, both national and local, both men and women, were beaten to death, or arrested and imprisoned, or placed in concentration camps, or executed, or hunted into exile. Extermination

was the aim, and every weapon in the armoury of terrorism was utilised.

It seemed as though the new rulers of Germany and their hordes of brutalised and brutal followers had become utterly devoid of any spirit of humanity. No one with any spark of humanity and spirit of justice in them can remain unmoved by descriptions of the stark evil of that black tragedy.

A powerful, well-organised and enlightened force that had operated in the political and social life of the people for more than half a century was completely "liquidated". As with the Social Democrats, so also with the Communists.

The workers' political parties having been disintegrated and destroyed, their industrial organisations [speedily met with a similar fate. The trade unions, which represented a total membership approaching five millions, and were rightly regarded as one of the most powerful industrial labour movements in the world, were dissolved, and their large funds and valuable properties confiscated.

This was a foul and fatal blow, for it deprived the workers of their principal and most effective weapon of defence. It was the trade unions, rather than the political parties, that not only possessed the necessary power but had been ready to employ it, in the last resort, to defend

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the Weimar Republic, and to resist counter-revolutionary conspiracies and adventures aimed at depriving the people of their democratic liberties. On the occasion of the Kapp Putsch the general strike had saved the day. A general strike would probably have succeeded in defeating the *coup* in Prussia in July 1932, when the democratic ministers were contemptuously dismissed from office, and their constitutional powers surrendered without a struggle to the reactionary Von Papen and Von Schleicher, Hitler's immediate predecessors.

Hitler struck down the political and industrial organisations of the workers, because they were still capable of interposing decisive obstacles to the achievement and maintenance of dictatorship and to the enslavement of the people which it was bent on achieving. Some idea of what the destruction of the democratic working-class organisations—political, industrial, co-operative and cultural—meant to the working masses of Germany can be gained by a British or French or American worker, if he will imagine for a moment his own country coming under the iron heel of a ruthless dictator, and his own national counterparts to the German working-class organisations and their leaders being accorded the same dastardly and destructive treatment.

In almost every direction Hitler turned his

unlimited power to the brutal purposes of his newly established domination. Justice became a mockery, and its procedure a farce. Legal terrorism set in on a grand scale. Goering announced that "the law and the will of Hitler are one." Mass arrests, mass imprisonment, mass vengeance were the means adopted to "liquidate" the enemies of the State—in other words, the opponents of Hitler. Protective custody and the concentration camp provided the Gestapo with handy facilities for their "cleaning-up" activities, and for enforcing obedience from the German masses. Intimidation, spying, denunciation, injected the poison of personal fear and insecurity into the life-streams of the nation.

An implacable hostility was loosed upon the Christian churches. The early suppression of the Centre Party was the first direct blow struck at the Catholic Church. A concordat, concluded by the late Pope with Hitler, was designed to secure that, while the Catholic priests renounced any political activity, they would be free to continue their spiritual work unmolested. But this did not prevent the Nazi leaders from pressing on with their attack against the Church and its institutions, and, throughout the years that have passed since, the Catholic Church has been sorely pressed by the Nazis.

Even more malignant has been the treatment



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meted out to the Protestant Church in the country of its birth. Free life within the Protestant communities has been the inspiration of its vigorous and flourishing existence throughout the world, but with the coming of Hitler, free and active community life was suppressed.

The Nazis arrogantly rejected the Christian faith, and sought to replace it with a "corrupt and corrupting paganism".

"There can be no teaching of religion as the pre-Hitler parents might still understand it," wrote E. O. Lorimer. This is not surprising when it is recalled that the Reich Minister for Church Affairs had proclaimed that "Adolf Hitler is the true Holy Ghost," and that the youth of Germany are being taught to chant "Let Christ rot and the Hitler Youth march on."

Hitlerism is not content with seeking to bind the body and stifle the mind of its victims with the fetters of its evil grip, but it seeks also to brand their souls with its own iniquity.

It is doubtful whether in their long and bitter history the Jews have been called upon to endure a more destructive repression and more grievous tribulations than have been their harsh lot under Hitler. His treatment of this sorely tried race will provide one of the blackest and most shocking chapters in the annals of "man's inhumanity to man". The shameful and cruel

persecution they have been made to suffer has shocked the conscience of all peoples in whom the spark of enlightenment and humanity has not been quenched. It has created a new and urgent problem—the problem of the refugee—which cries out to the liberal-minded and tolerant nations for speedy settlement.

For years the Nazi Movement preached anti-Semitism. Every real and imaginary ill which afflicted Germany, beginning with the defeat in war, was charged against the Jews. Edgar Mowrer has told us that the National Socialist propaganda made the German people Jew-conscious at the price of their national sanity. "What did it matter if only Hitler would come to power!" How could it happen that honest Germans were misled by this anti-Semitic denunciation and misrepresentation, which formed a main part of the Nazi Movement's propaganda? Let me quote Mr. Mowrer :

"Because," he answers, "they were taught to worship force, grew great by war, organised for war, and lost the greatest of all wars."

Let him continue :

"Since they had lost the war, since they were poor and weary and bewildered, since they had been taught to believe themselves a wronged and humiliated nation, the question inevitably arose, how could such a situation come to be? No people likes

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to admit its failings. Where, therefore, could the responsibility be put, if not on the Jews in their midst, the hateful foreign body in the otherwise flawless German Organism? In short, the suffering German hated the Jew rather than see himself as he was."

The man who has destroyed freedom in Germany, who rules by terror and despises the common people, who ridicules religion and persecutes the churches, who preaches race hatred and incites to fiendish discrimination, who has relegated truth to "protective custody" and good faith to the concentration camp—this man, who has enfeebled the German people by the moral diseases which he has introduced into the living body of the nation, far from being conscience-stricken by his sinister and diabolical work, had the audacity to proclaim that "in beating off the Jews I am fighting for the work of the Lord!"

The last War Chancellor of Imperial Germany, Prince Max von Baden, wrote that "the history of every nation can tell of governments which believed that they had adequately secured the authority of the State when they had forced obedience on reluctant subjects." But it is a far more terrible thing when forced obedience is accompanied by moral degradation, spiritual deterioration and cultural debasement.

## 4. THE ROAD TO WAR

Underlying Hitler's struggle for power, and inspiring him as dictator, was a conception of national and international policy that passes under the convenient label of "Nazi ideology". In Germany it meant the complete subjection of the citizen to the purposes of the Totalitarian State. In international affairs it meant the tenacious pursuit of a policy of national aggrandisement and German domination, to be achieved by all the ugly methods of power politics. This ideology, which was given but the faintest expression in the twenty-five points of the Nazi programme, and expounded at interminable length and with remarkable frankness in *Mein Kampf*, was founded upon recognised and well-known German Junker and militarist conceptions of the pre-War era.

It was a revival and expansion of the familiar doctrine of Pan-Germanism or racial unity, which had been one of the springs of Bismarck's soaring ambition and Machiavellian actions. It aimed at imposing as an article of national faith the doctrine of German race superiority—"only the German people is called to rule the earth" was the modest assertion of one German writer—and at fanning into flame the passions of race prejudice by its crude and cruel anti-Semitic incite-

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ments. It set out a programme of aggression and conquest, which called for the ending of the restrictions of the military clauses of the Peace Treaty and the development of German military power on a gigantic scale. To this end, it sought to rekindle the military ardour of the German nation and to restore its confidence in the old doctrine of the right of power and the power of might.

All these were the ingredients of the assertive spirit of German militarism and Imperial ambition which had enabled Prussia to establish ascendancy over the German States, wrest the leadership of the Germanic peoples from the less resolute grip of the enfeebled Hapsburgs, defeat France and despoil her of two provinces, establish the German Empire as the most powerful military nation of the early twentieth century, and to come within sight of winning the Great War of 1914-18, which would have given her overlordship of the world.

Hitler's grandiose aims in foreign policy depended for their realisation upon the successful employment of the notorious methods and practices of power politics. Believing that "right abides in strength alone", he required massive force at his disposal, both to strengthen the power of his diplomacy and, if occasion should arise, as a weapon by which he could conduct a successful war.

But the weapon had first to be forged. It was necessary, therefore, for him to secure both the opportunity and the freedom to restore German military power. He was fully aware that the peoples of other nations had been deeply shocked and gravely perturbed by the emergence of the Nazi dictatorship ; that it had inspired feelings of hatred and detestation by its internal repression, violent destruction of democratic liberties and democratic institutions and agencies, and by its cruel subjugation of the masses through the tyranny of fear and terror.

He knew, though he despised them for it, that all peoples shared a passionate hatred of war ; that they longed for nothing so much as to be allowed to live in peace and security so that they could freely and safely devote their energies and resources to building up a higher order of economic prosperity, social well-being and human happiness.

He knew, too, and he despised them for it, that the leaders of democratic Germany had been treading the path of peace and international co-operation. It was not surprising, therefore, that fear and anxiety should be widespread regarding Nazi Germany's aims and intentions touching the rights and interests of other nations.

Hitler determined to counter these natural and justifiable reactions by guile and deception.

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Almost every one of his early speeches as Fuehrer and Chancellor was addressed to the task of creating and cultivating external faith in his professions of peace. The world was told that the "first and best point of the Government's programme is that we won't lie and we won't swindle"; that Germany wants nothing that she will not give to others; that the German Government wish to settle all difficult questions with other Governments by peaceful methods; that the German people have no thought of invading any country. By these and similar assurances Hitler sought to lull suspicions, and to foster an atmosphere favourable to his purposes.

During this period he took steps to free Germany from the legal disabilities imposed by the Versailles Treaty, and from the moral restraints which, under the operation of the League of Nations, had come to exercise an important and valuable influence on the conduct of international affairs. It cannot be denied that, whatever may have been the defects of this new international institution in its infant and adolescent years, it did exercise across a wide range of problems a beneficial influence, and was steadily building up a body of peaceful procedure and practice that promised to become one of the most effective safeguards of peace. Moreover, it was a powerful

focal point of world public opinion—an opinion that was drawn from all classes and all nations, and was capable of exerting on discussions and decisions affecting vital problems of world peace a moral influence that could not be ignored.

But neither binding covenants nor democratic internationalism suited Hitler. The dilatoriness of the Disarmament Conference, which reflected the indisposition of Governments to adopt drastic measures, played into his hands and provided him with the pretext that he needed. Choosing his moment (October 14th, 1933), Hitler recalled the German delegates from the Conference, and announced Germany's resignation from the League. This action was his way of putting an end to Germany's association with the rest of the world in organised international collaboration.

A controlled election, in November 1933, was designed to provide a demonstration to the world of popular support for the Nazi régime. Nearly 90 per cent of the electors cast their votes, willingly, discreetly, or under compulsion, for Hitler. In June 1934, he carried through with unrestrained ferocity the first Nazi purge, and wiped out the element associated with Captain Roehm, the organiser of the Nazi Storm Troops, who were menacing his plans for securing the co-operation of the Army leaders.

On the death of the aged Field-Marshal Von



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Hindenburg, whose instigated disloyalty to the Republic had placed Hitler in office as Chancellor, Hitler abolished the post of President of the Reich, became Fuehrer and Chancellor, and secured from the Army an oath of personal allegiance. Hitler was now Dictator with greater power and authority than had been exercised by the Kaiser.

At last he was in a position to devote his restless energies to the organisation of the enormous financial, industrial and labour resources of the State, for the rapid realisation of one of his consuming ambitions—the rebuilding of Germany's armed might. In March 1935, conscription was reintroduced ; but neither Europe nor the world was aware that the event heralded the unproclaimed launching of remilitarisation and rearmament of Germany on a scale that was to force all nations into the most extensive and the costliest armaments race in history.

An Agreement with Britain, by which Germany accepted 30 per cent. of British naval tonnage as her ratio of sea strength, helped to allay any incipient uneasiness in this country, where the people had recently given a remarkable demonstration, through a nation-wide Peace Ballot, of their loyalty to the League, to the policy of collective security, and to the application of sanctions, under the League, to restrain aggres-

sion. This Peace opinion was capable of proving itself the decisive factor of the forthcoming General Election, and the Government of the day, well-informed though they were regarding the disturbing situation that Germany was creating, were afraid of alienating the peace-minded masses by appearing before them as the sponsors of full-blooded rearmament. Nazi Germany took full advantage of British unwillingness to be drawn into a new armaments race.

Another factor intervened at this juncture to Hitler's benefit. Mussolini began his war against Abyssinia. While the statesmen and the peoples of the nations loyal to the League were preoccupied with this case of unprovoked aggression, Hitler turned the occasion to profit by re-occupying the Rhineland with troops, and starting upon its complete remilitarisation on the most modern lines. Taking advantage of Italian ill-feeling towards the Western Democracies, which was engendered by their application of certain economic sanctions, Hitler began to pursue a policy of developing collaboration with Mussolini—a working partnership which was to have profound effects upon Europe during the next four years, and the first fruits of which was a joint policy of active intervention in the Spanish Civil War in support of General Franco and against the Republican Government.

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In the meantime, the creation and training of a large army, to be well-equipped with the most modern instruments of war and possessing a special striking force of highly mechanised divisions, had been pressed forward with feverish energy. German industry had been placed on a war production basis. It was known that Germany was building a powerful air force, but neither its size, nor the speed at which it was being developed, was suspected. When the Western Democracies became fully alive to the new peril which threatened them, it had ceased to be a question of Germany securing equality. Germany had gained a marked and dangerous superiority of air power.

"Policy and villainy," said Frederick the Great, "are almost synonymous terms. I mean by the word *policy* that we must always try to dupe the other people." Hitler was a man after Frederick's own heart. He soon proved himself a master craftsman in the nefarious arts of villainy and duplicity. A gangster in the national life of Germany, he became a gangster in the wider life of Europe. No leader of a nation in modern times has given more written or verbal hostages to personal honour than Hitler, and then acted with greater dishonour. In international, as in national, affairs, he has lived up to his cynical philosophy that "it pays to lie".

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Hitler was now ready to throw off the mask of dissimulation, and to apply himself to a policy of bringing new territories under his control by "bloodless victories". The first victim of planned aggression was Austria, whose democratic defence had already been destroyed by her own rulers. The technique he applied was one of friendly public assurance, followed later by incitements to internal conflicts, the encouragement of the Austrian Nazis, and the ceaseless promotion of secret intrigues. Time after time Austria was assured, both by public declaration and formal agreements, that Hitler had no designs against her independence. Even as late as July 1936, an Austro-German agreement was signed by which the Hitler Government recognised the "full sovereignty" of Austria, and pledged itself not to interfere in Austria's internal affairs.

Not only did Hitler fail to call a halt to German Nazi interference ; he steadily intensified it, and developed his technique to the next stage—a combination of bitter denunciation of the Austrian Government, personal insult and vituperation against the Austrian Chancellor, accusations of maltreatment against "my people, my German people of Austria", and threats that he would not tolerate an indefinite continuation of these "intolerable" conditions. Then he began to marshal his forces on the Austrian

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frontier, and, early in 1938, instructed his representative, the notorious Von Papen, to get Schuschnigg to Berchtesgaden, confronted the latter with terms of surrender and demanded his immediate acceptance of them, and, indulging in almost maniacal outbursts of fantastic declamation and shameful abuse, declared that the alternative would be immediate invasion. Schuschnigg, the victim of treason and menace, was forced to bow to the inevitable, and within a few days Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany.

In May 1936, Hitler had complained that "the lie goes forth again that Germany to-morrow or the day after will fall upon Austria and Czecho-Slovakia". Having so easily achieved his first "bloodless victory" by subduing Austria, he now proceeded to employ the same technique against the democratic Republic which was rightly regarded as a bastion of peace and democracy, and to which "the word of honour" of Field-Marshal Goering was given that Germany entertained no hostile intentions.

The instrument to Hitler's hand for stirring up internal strife was the Henlein (Nazi) Movement of the German-speaking territories. Again he announced himself as the protector of "my people", who, he alleged, were being shamefully dealt with by an inferior race.

It is true that there existed in the Sudeten

territory an acute social problem, due to widespread unemployment arising out of the world industrial crisis. This problem was more accentuated in the Sudeten areas because they were highly industrialised, and had been badly hit by the German Nazi economic policy, which had greatly reduced Czech exports to the Reich. Moreover, 20,000 workers had been thrown out of work in the frontier districts alone, owing to the refusal of the German Nazi authorities to allow them to continue their normal employment across the border in Germany.

But it was undeniably true that the rights and liberties enjoyed by the German minority in Czecho-Slovakia were far superior to those of any minority in Germany, and, indeed, to those of the German nation itself under Nazi domination. At no time did the Sudeten Germans demand incorporation in Nazi Germany.

Legitimate and alleged grievances were exploited, and discontent stimulated, by Henlein's Nazi propaganda. Constitutional reforms proposed by the Czecho-Slovak Government were rejected. British "mediation" by Lord Runciman led to further concessions being made, including the reorganisation of the State on the basis of Cantons, enjoying wide powers of self-government. Every attempt to satisfy reasonable Henlein demands, while at the same time

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preserving the territorial integrity and political independence of the State was frustrated. The only solution that Henlein dared to accept was the Hitler solution, and that aimed at the destruction of Czecho-Slovakia. Hitler's demand was yield or we invade.

The penultimate chapter of the tragic doom of the gallant democratic Republic can be written in three words : Berchtesgaden ! Godesberg ! Munich ! Deserted by allies and friends alike, the betrayed Republic was compelled to capitulate by accepting terms which had been arranged over her head and without her consent. The Sudetenland (and more), with its magnificent chain of defensive fortresses, was annexed by Germany, and the power of the State to protect and preserve its independence utterly destroyed. Its President, who with the late Dr. Masaryk, had been a co-founder of the new and independent Republic twenty years earlier, resigned from office and left the country, in order not to provide the Nazis with any pretext for new demands upon his violated and unhappy native land.

The dismembered and continuously harassed State was permitted only a few months of constricted existence. In March 1939, the bitter experience of the preceding September was repeated. Dr. Benes's successor, President



Hodza, was peremptorily summoned to Berchtesgaden and presented with a new ultimatum. Immediate acceptance or immediate bombing of Prague was the choice given to him. By the threat of violence another "bloodless victory" was gained by Hitler, the Republic of Czechoslovakia was dissolved, and the bulk of its territories and peoples passed under the iron heel of Hitlerism.

Within a week representatives from Lithuania were summoned to Hitler, and they in their turn were presented with an ultimatum for immediate acceptance. Either surrender Memel, or Kaunas will be bombed. They, too, surrendered.

The first treaty of non-aggression signed by Hitler was with Poland in 1934. This agreement, which was to operate for ten years, provided that in no circumstances would either party proceed to the application of force for the purpose of reaching a decision in any dispute between them. "Germany," said Hitler, on March 16th, 1935, "has concluded a non-aggression Pact with Poland which is more than a valuable contribution to European peace, *and she will adhere to it unconditionally.*"

On the eve of his first bloodless war, Hitler gave a further most categorical reassurance to Poland.



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Speaking in Berlin on February 28th, 1938, he stated that "The Polish State respects the national conditions of this country, and Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights. Thus it has been possible to find the way to an understanding which, emanating from Danzig, in spite of the assertions of many mischief-makers, has succeeded in removing all friction between Germany and Poland, and made it possible to work together in true amity."

This declaration belongs to the same category of deceit as those made to Austria and Czechoslovakia, which were merely a mask for the evil designs that were never absent from his mind, and which he had no intention of forgoing.

Within a week of the occupation of Prague, Hitler disclosed his future intentions regarding Poland. He demanded the return of Danzig into the framework of the Reich, and that Germany should receive "a motor route and railway with extra-territorial status through the Polish Corridor". In exchange, Hitler offered a 25 years' Non-Aggression Pact, and a pledge that Germany would regard the existing boundaries between Germany and Poland as "ultimate".

The Polish counter-offer was that there should be a joint guarantee of the separate character of the Free City of Danzig, the existence of which

was to be based on complete freedom of the local population in internal affairs, and on the assurance of respect for Polish rights and interests. The Polish Government stated that they were prepared to examine with the German Government any further simplification for persons in transit, as well as the technical facilities of railway and motor transit, between the German Reich and East Prussia.

Again Hitler brought into operation the technique which had proved so serviceable against both Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. The Nazi elements within the Free City were encouraged to the sort of internal incitement which Europe had now come to regard as the preliminary for providing Hitler with the pretext for aggressive action and the application of pressure by force. The situation in Danzig rapidly deteriorated, and a campaign of denunciation, accusation and abuse against Poland was developed.

British influence was exerted to secure the opening-up of direct discussions between Germany and Poland. The Polish Government consistently held to their readiness for joint discussions on terms of equality and free from pressure. But Hitler had made up his mind "to teach the Poles a lesson", and he did not intend to be baulked a second time of an opportunity to demonstrate to

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Europe in a safe little war the military might of Nazi Germany.

By August 29th Hitler, true to form, was ready to launch his ultimatum, and informed the British Ambassador that Germany required the presence, within 24 hours, of a Polish plenipotentiary authorised to accept his demands. No direct communication was made to the Polish Government, who were never officially informed by Hitler of his demands, and on September 1st Germany launched her war of conquest against Poland. Two days later, Britain and France, in virtue of their defensive alliance of mutual assistance, declared war against Nazi Germany.

### 5. A PACT THAT ENDED PEACE

The destruction of a free and independent Czecho-Slovakia by Hitler's act of perfidy in March 1939, was a decisive event. It was an unmasking of his evil designs that could no longer be ignored. It gave the *coup de main* to the policy of "appeasement" which the British and French Governments had been pursuing. World opinion was ranged against this policy. The Labour Movement had steadfastly opposed it, while most sections of public opinion had been deeply distrustful of it.

Labour held that concessions to Hitler's threats would do nothing to remove the dangers of war from Europe. It had resisted at every stage the progressive retreat from the League policy of collective security. It had insisted, time and again, that surrender to Nazi intimidation and threats would not banish the growing sense of insecurity and peril which held the nations of Europe in its grip; that it would encourage Hitler in his encroachments, and that, when active resistance to continued aggression could no longer be avoided, the situation would have become more difficult for the peace-defending nations.

The confidence of small nations in the practical help of the League had been seriously undermined. They feared for their own security, and sought to ensure safety by withdrawing into a state of neutrality. A large scheme of collective security by mutual assistance under the League, such as was envisaged by the Geneva Protocol of 1924, ceased to be attainable.

Hopes had, therefore, become centred in a Peace Front, composed of Britain, France and Soviet Russia, to which it was considered likely that some, at least, of the small nations threatened by German expansion would adhere. In such an alliance, it was believed, resided the one hope of maintaining peace. Its superior defence power

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would suffice to deter Hitler from plunging Europe into a war, which Nazi Germany would have to wage on two fronts simultaneously.

The seizure of Czecho-Slovakia by Germany in March 1939, and the invasion of Albania by Italy in April, led the British and French Governments to give Poland, Rumania and Greece, guarantees of full support in the event of any act of aggression against them. The guarantees to Poland were later replaced by Treaties of Mutual Assistance against German aggression.

On March 23rd, British trade talks with Soviet Russia began. Three weeks later discussions started between Britain, France and Russia for active co-operation in a Peace Front against German aggression.

Before the discussions opened by the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow had proceeded beyond their initial stages, it was announced to the world that Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Union Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had been dismissed, and had been succeeded by Molotov, the Soviet Union Prime Minister. Litvinov had been regarded as the architect of Soviet Russia's policy of collaboration for peace through the League of Nations. He it was who coined the slogan : "Peace is indivisible." His dismissal was generally regarded as indicating a change in Russian foreign policy.

Surprising and unexpected proof was soon to be forthcoming ; but, at that stage, an Anglo-French-Russian Peace Alliance continued to represent the urgent hopes of the democratic nations.

Negotiations, however, proceeded slowly and unsatisfactorily. The sending of a Foreign Office official from London to assist the British Ambassador in Moscow was resented as a calculated discourtesy to the Soviet Government. The Labour Party, both in Parliament and in the country, brought strong pressure upon the Government to make a serious endeavour to speed up the negotiations and to bring them to a successful conclusion, and to this end urged that the Foreign Secretary, or other Cabinet Minister with status and authority, should be sent to Moscow.

The discussions dragged on into July, and, when the stage was reached at which it appeared that the obstacles to political agreement had been reduced to the question of the definition of "indirect aggression", British and French military missions were sent to Moscow to enter upon Staff talks. The House of Commons was informed by the Prime Minister that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had expressed the view that "if we once began military conversations, to which he attached very great importance,

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the political difficulties should not prove insuperable."

These Staff talks, which were started on August 12th, were still in progress when, on the night of August 21st, the announcement was issued in Berlin that Herr von Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister, was to fly to Moscow two days later to sign a pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union. This Pact had been negotiated while the British-French-Russian discussions were being carried on.

Here was a bombshell whose explosion at once wrecked the hoped-for Three-Power Peace Pact against Nazi aggression, and blew up the anti-Comintern Pact against Russia for which von Ribbentrop had been chiefly responsible, and within a few days shattered the peace of Europe.

Hitler need fear no longer that aggression against Poland might involve him in a war on two fronts. Indeed, he nursed the illusion that Britain and France, deserted by the Soviet Union, would not now fulfil their treaty obligations to Poland in the event of a German attack. A short, sharp and successful war against Poland, and another almost bloodless victory would be won. And, if Britain and France were so incredibly foolish as to resist him, he would bring them to sanity by the overpowering might of Germany.

Thus it was that Hitler gave the order for the attack upon Poland and plunged Europe into another Great War. By doing so Hitler committed the crime that will bring his dictatorship down in ruins.

What of Russia?

Stalin had determined to keep Russia out of war at any cost. He preferred the easy profits of perfidy to the hard risk of defending peace. The democratic nations had refused to satisfy his demands upon the Baltic States as the price of his support against aggression. He extracted agreement to them from Germany as part of his price for not resisting German aggression.

But Stalin also had made a grave mistake. In Poland and in the Baltic States he achieved his ends and kept Russia at peace. But, when he came to deal with Finland, he was faced by a democratic people who were prepared to fight to maintain their freedom and independence.

And so it was that Soviet Russia, which had sacrificed both peace and the peace nations in order to keep out of war, found herself deeply engaged in a war of imperialist aggression against a small, peaceful and democratic Republic.

If, as has been urged, Russia's action was dictated by fear of a combined attack upon her by Germany, Britain and France, the excuse is as foolish as the action was vile.



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It is true that Britain is a capitalist country. But it is also an increasingly democratic country, and its people are strong in their love of peace. I do not hesitate to say in the most emphatic terms that no British Government, whatever its political complexion might be, could, even if it wished to do so, carry the British people into a war of aggression against Russia or any other country. Neither the Labour Movement, which, in such circumstances, would wield a decisive influence, nor the vast majority of the nation, would allow any British Government to enter upon such an evil path. The British people continue to exercise the democratic means of enforcing their common will, and if there is one issue upon which they have a common will, it is on the question of unprovoked aggression.

That democratic Britain and France would be prepared to emulate Hitler and Stalin in violating their pledged word, and make an infamous deal with Nazi Germany to destroy Soviet Russia, belongs to the realm of the fantastic and impossible. To hold such a suspicion seriously would indicate in Stalin's mind a conception of the British people which is shared only by Hitler and is a gross travesty of the character and aims of the British nation.

The British and French peoples entered upon the war with Hitler Germany for the open,

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avowed and accepted purpose of freeing themselves and the other nations of Europe from recurring acts of aggression and domination. When that purpose has been achieved, they will readily resume the peaceful ways of life from which they were wrenched only by the violence of Hitlerism.

If Soviet Russia had any real ground for fear or alarm, it could only have been because of Hitler's aggressive policy of expansion, which the Stalin Government has itself so frequently and so bitterly denounced. The Stalin-Hitler Pact was only in name a non-aggression Pact. Events have proved it to be in effect an aggression pact, for it was the prelude to unprovoked and undeclared wars against Poland and against Finland. It did not save peace; it ended peace. Its basis was the breaking of a non-aggression pact which each powerful aggressor had already made with his victim. How long and to what extent the agreement will operate remains to be seen. Common disloyalty and bad faith are not calculated to foster mutual trust.

### 6. LABOUR'S EFFORTS FOR PEACE

The world is so familiar with the tragic events of these last eighteen months that I have considered it sufficient to deal with them in only

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the barest outline. They constituted a decisive challenge to civilisation which could no longer be evaded. No one has posed the alternatives before the world in more simple and direct terms than did the United States Secretary of State. In a broadcast on August 16th, 1938, Mr. Cordell Hull said :

“There confronts the nations to-day a clear-cut issue : Is the future of the world to be determined by universal reliance upon armed force, and frequent resort to aggression, with resultant autarchy, impoverishment, loss of individual independence, and international anarchy ? Or will practices of peace, morality, justice, and order under law, resting upon a sound foundation of economic well-being, security and progress, guide and govern in international relations ?”

How just and true was that appreciation of the growing perils to which the nations were being driven by Hitler has been emphasised by the inescapable logic of the events that have occurred since.

An already intolerable position reached its climax when Hitler committed his latest act of aggression. Faced with the choice of further surrender or final resistance, Britain, with the full support of the Labour Movement, decided unhesitatingly to meet the challenge.

In taking its decision, which ensured that the

British people entered the war as a united people, Labour was acting in strict loyalty to its own principles and policy.

We are a Peace Party. We hate war with a passionate hatred. We had been in the forefront of the demand for the creation of a League of Nations as the international machinery for securing the peaceful settlement of all disputes between nations, and for establishing the just rule of law throughout the world. We had not only advocated revision of the punitive clauses of the Versailles Treaty, but through two Labour Governments had given practical proof of our sincerity.

We had been consistently loyal to the principles of collective security and to the cause of world Disarmament, and had strongly protested against every disloyalty and sacrifice which had steadily reduced the effective power of the League for peace. At the same time we had opposed economic nationalism, and urged the need for world economic planning with a view to ensuring steadily improving world trade conditions in which all nations should benefit, and had advocated the just sharing of markets and access to the sources of raw materials. In short, we had been genuinely concerned not only to prevent war, but also to remove the root causes of war.

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But we had long recognised that the aims of Hitlerism and the methods of Hitler were a continuous menace to all that Labour holds most dear in both national and international life.

We had watched with anxiety the rise of Hitlerism to power, knowing that not only was it destroying freedom and democracy in Germany, but that it was a dangerous menace to the peace of the whole world.

Year after year in Party Conferences, in Trade Union Congresses, at its public meetings, in its political literature and in its Press, the Labour Movement had carried on an intensive education of its members and the British public regarding the doctrines of Hitlerism, so that they had become invulnerable to the efforts of various Fascist organisations to gain adherents among the workers.

As early as May 1933, we defined Hitlerism in the following terms :

"Fascism in Germany is intolerance, violence, oppression ; the abrogation of the rule of law and justice in the matter of freedom of speech, freedom of writing, freedom of assembly, the right of association and the protection of the property of working-class organisations and individual anti-Fascists from destruction or seizure ; the worship of an abstract entity, a narrow, bigoted, nationalist ideal, to which the individual must be sacrificed ; a

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puerile glorification of everything German ; a denial of any contribution to German culture of the great Jewish race, and a fierce jealousy of the intellectual achievements of that race expressed in vindictive persecution. It is the subjection of the intellectual and political life of a people to the will of one militarised party."

As Nazi repression and tyranny became more vicious and more violent in their operation, and more destructive in their consequences, Labour's hatred became sharpened and its foreboding more deeply rooted.

In May 1935, the Labour and Socialist International declared that "to make use of every means for mobilising the public opinion of the world against Nazi dictatorship is one of the most important tasks in the struggle against war. This dictatorship oppresses its own people and is a menace to people abroad. Only by their own efforts can the German people reconquer their freedom. Their victory will be the victory of all peoples in that it will serve the cause of Peace."

We knew that the German people were held in the crushing grip of an inhuman dictatorship, whose internal pressure was never eased but was becoming ever more harsh and cruel.

We knew that they were the victims of ever-worsening industrial conditions, that an insatiable

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war machine was yoking them to forced labour, imposing intolerably long working hours, and rewarding them with constantly less wages ; that the cost of living was steadily rising ; that there was a shortage of essential articles of food ; that masses of them were underfed, and more prone to illness and exhaustion under the fast pace and heavy strain of industrial life ; that the workers as a whole were beaten down in material discontent and spiritual despair ; and that millions of them were as deeply anxious about the dangerous plans of their masters as were the peoples abroad.

We hated and detested Hitlerism for all its evil effects upon the workers of Germany, its fiendish persecution of the Jews, and its barbarous spoliation of the cultural life of Germany, and we did not hesitate to express our deep and uncompromising hostility in clear and outspoken denunciation. But we always recognised that Hitlerism internally was a matter primarily for the German people themselves to deal with. When, however, its grasping tentacles began to reach out to States and peoples that formed no part of the German Reich, it became a matter of immediate and direct concern to other nations.

A disturbingly dangerous international situation had developed in 1937. "There is grave risk of a general war in the near future," was

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Labour's warning. "During the past two years, there is good reason to believe that Europe has more than once been on the very brink of the precipice." Continuous instigation of Nazi treasonable activities in Austria, undisguised Fascist intervention in Spain, and later Hitler's preliminary manœuvres against Czecho-Slovakia, combined to create deep-seated apprehension regarding the immediate future.

It was at this stage that the Labour Movement determined to re-state its policy in a document which was adopted by both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference of that year. "International Policy and Defence" was the title of this important policy declaration. It recalled the following passage from "Labour's Immediate Programme" which had been adopted by the Labour Party Conference a year earlier as part of the plan of work to be undertaken by a Labour Government :

"A Labour Government will make every endeavour to remove the economic causes of international rivalry, and to enable all peaceful nations to share, on fair terms, in the abundant wealth of the world. It will take the lead in seeking to strengthen and re-invigorate the League of Nations as an instrument of International Co-operation and Collective Security. It will play its full part in every effort to check the present ruinous Arms Race, and to promote Disarmament by international agreement, and in



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particular to substitute an International Air Police Force for National Air Forces and to establish an International Service of Civil Aviation.

"A Labour Government will unhesitatingly maintain such armed forces as are necessary to defend our country and to fulfil our obligations as a member of the British Commonwealth and of the League of Nations. . . .

"A Bill will be passed enabling the Government to take over any undertaking manufacturing munitions of War."

It was emphasised that this policy involved working as closely as possible with the Great Powers that had retained effective membership at Geneva, and with all other States which were willing to join with them in making the League once more a reality ; that it involved the careful exploration of the possibility of organising Collective Security and Economic Co-operation on a surer basis than hitherto, and of forming a strong group of peaceful States pledged to mutual aid against aggression and to effective co-operation among themselves.

The formation of exclusive alliances of the pre-war pattern was repudiated. Any group on the lines proposed, we insisted, must be open to any nation to join and to share its benefits, on condition that it accepted the obligations of membership.

These were the lines along which a Labour

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Government would "seek to strengthen and re-invigorate the League".

The statement proceeded to assert that if we rejected, as we should, the theory of an inevitable Great War, and, if at the same time, we looked facts in the face, we were driven to a double conclusion :

"Only Germany, Italy and Japan, which are already committing aggressive acts in various parts of the world, seriously threaten Peace at the present time. Moreover, there is a very real danger that they may threaten it in alliance with one another.

"Therefore our policy should be twofold. On the one hand, we should invite Powers which entertain grievances to state their case, and should offer, through the League, not only to these three potential aggressors, but to all nations, a new system of political security and of economic opportunity which will banish from international relations both the fear of war and all legitimate economic grievances.

"This new system, however, must form part of a general settlement, which will relax the present international tension and hold out prospects of an enduring Peace. On the other hand, we must, through the League, confront the aggressors with an emphatic superiority of armed force."

Labour's view of the urgency of the situation was stressed by the inclusion of a declaration that a Government acting on the principles advocated by Labour, in the present state of the

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world, "must be strongly equipped to defend this country, to play its full part in Collective Security, and to resist any intimidation by the Fascist Powers designed to frustrate the fulfilment of our obligations".

Under the growing pressure of Nazi menaces and provocations and the indisputable evidence of their aggressive intentions, British Labour had now for the first time in its history accepted national rearmament as inevitable and necessary.

When Hitler's preparations against Austria and Czecho-Slovakia were being rushed ahead in readiness for action, the Labour Movement again sought to give a lead. "Organised Labour," it reminded the nation on February 22nd, 1938, "has given steadfast support to the policy of making the League of Nations an instrument for the preservation of peace through the observance of international law and respect for the rights of all nations. British Labour, in agreement with the organised working-class movements of other countries, has never ceased to protest against breaches of international agreements, to oppose aggressive action by one country against another, and to refuse to recognise conquests obtained by war or the threat of war."

With our minds clearly foreseeing Hitler's coming aggressive and expansionist action against

his less powerful and entirely peaceful neighbours, we proclaimed :

"This is not the time for concessions to the dictators, but for a clear declaration by this country that we stand for the enforcement of treaties, and against lawless force and interference in the internal affairs of independent States, whether in the name of spurious anti-Communism or of Pan-Germanism. Czecho-Slovakia should be assured that democratic States will recognise their treaty obligations to maintain her integrity and independence."

Later in the year (September 8th) a further declaration stated :

"Peace is a living principle of the Labour Movement. Its members are the common people who are the first to suffer and the last to recover from the ravages of war. British Labour does not stand for an unchanging world, but it demands the rule of law as a necessary condition of economic and social justice for all peoples, including the German people. Peaceful change can only come through friendly negotiations. Labour cannot acquiesce in the destruction of the rule of law by savage aggression.

"The British Labour Movement, therefore, demands the immediate summoning of Parliament. It is in that historic assembly of our democratic State that these principles should be reaffirmed with the utmost energy and determination. Whatever the risks involved, Great Britain must make its stand against aggression. There is now no room for doubt or hesitation."

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"The time has come," we insisted, "for a positive and unmistakable lead for collective defence against aggression and to safeguard peace."

Our policy was not followed : our advice was not heeded. First Austria was seized. A few months later, we had "Munich", by which the Prime Minister believed that he had saved peace, though at a heavy cost to Czecho-Slovakia, and ensured the continued existence of the Democratic Republic, shorn of its Sudeten territories, as a free and independent State.

The fate meted out to Czecho-Slovakia in September 1938 drew from British Labour a sharp protest :

"This is a shameful surrender to the threats of Herr Hitler.

"Although the Czecho-Slovakian Republic had gone to the extreme limit of concession under the auspices of Lord Runciman, the British Government has set aside all considerations of freedom, equality and justice and has consented to the virtual destruction of the Czecho-Slovak State.

"This is not merely the sacrifice of a gallant democratic people ; it is the sacrifice of the vital British interests involved in the sanctity of international law.

"Britain's established traditions of democracy and justice have been dishonoured. This dishonour will not bring us peace. Hitler's ambitions do not stop short at Czecho-Slovakia.

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"There is no longer a frontier in Europe which is safe. Hitler's present triumph will be a new starting point for further warlike adventures which in the end must lead to a general conflict.

"With every surrender to violence peace recedes. If war is to be averted and civilisation saved, the peace-loving nations must make an immediate and concerted effort to restore the rule of law."

Within six months the Prime Minister was to find that Hitler had tricked him, and that "Munich", far from saving Czecho-Slovakia had merely postponed the evil fate which Hitler had always had in store for her. Within a year he was to discover that "Munich" had not saved the peace, but only delayed war.

When, in March 1939, Czech independence was finally destroyed and the Czech territories and peoples were forcibly incorporated within Hitler Germany, British Labour renewed its demand for the "National" Government to take definite action for the defence of peace.

In a new declaration, the National Council of Labour recalled Labour's consistent loyalty to the principles of the policy of collective security and its persistent efforts, despite misrepresentation of its aims, to secure the effective operation of that policy by the "National" Government. Events had proved that the policy of "appeasement", based on faith in Hitler's promises, was a disastrous illusion.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

The declaration proceeded :

"Labour has on many occasions declared its opposition to any form of Alliance designed to serving nationalist or imperialist ends, but at the same time it has urged the vital importance of Britain taking the lead in bringing into being a powerful combination of Peace nations, pledged to resist unprovoked aggression as the only effective means of safeguarding the security of all.

"The National Council of Labour, therefore, calls upon the 'National' Government to take the initiative without delay to make a Peace pact with France and Russia, and all other nations that will join with them, for the purpose of defending Peace by collective efforts to resist any further act of aggression by Germany."

The conquest of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia resulted not only in the annexation of their territories but also in the forcible subjugation of their peoples to the same shocking Nazi repressions and oppressions as had reduced Germany itself to submission. The workers' free organisations were destroyed, and the wealth, resources, and sustenance of the two States became booty for the invader. Was any neighbour or near neighbour safe from these predatory criminals?

The shadows of impending catastrophe which were deepening daily caused the Labour Movement, on July 1st, 1939, to send a direct appeal

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to the German people, in the course of which it declared :

"Your Government has persistently rejected the method of peaceful negotiation in promoting its aims and has preferred threats, blackmail and acts of violence. Events culminating in the brutal seizure of Czecho-Slovakia last March have convinced us that your Government is aiming at nothing less than the domination and enslavement of all Europe.

"And now the familiar process of warlike preparation, lying propaganda and stimulated disturbance is being operated against Poland in respect of Danzig. You must face the fact that, if this is continued, the result will be war."

Stating that "only by peaceful collaboration can we build a happy, secure and prosperous world", the appeal concluded with the assurance:

"As soon as your Government is reasonable, as soon as its methods are those of peace and not of violence, negotiations on a basis of equality can take place. Far from wishing to encircle your country with a view to crushing it, we invite you to come into the circle yourselves, to join up with a world-wide combination of nations so that the great abilities of the German people may make their contribution to the establishment of a friendly world in which mankind can prosper.

"Let the Governments of all lands know that the peoples have no wish to slaughter each other, but to live together in peace and friendship."



## BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

On the eve of Germany's military attack upon Poland, the Labour Movement made a further appeal to the German people :

"War is very near. You must clearly understand that, if war comes, Britain and France both stand firmly by their pledges to Poland.

"If Herr Hitler attacks Poland, it will be war for Germany not only with Poland but, from the first day, with Britain and France also. Your Government does not tell you the truth. British Labour, which is the friend of the German people, will tell you the truth.

"Your Government has just made a pact of non-aggression with Moscow. The Government which for six years you have been told was your major enemy is now transformed overnight into your historic friend.

"British Labour tells you with all solemnity that this Pact has made no difference at all to the position of Britain and France. The pledges of the British Government to Poland, with the approval of British Labour, stand completely unaffected.

"But the Pact which Herr Hitler has made with Russia has already seriously disturbed many of the friends of Germany.

"If war comes, Germany, perhaps alone, will have to face the combined strength of Great Britain and her self-governing Dominions, France, Poland and, it may well be, other Powers.

"There need be no war. Provided that the threat of force is renounced, there can be just and peaceful settlement of all international disputes. This which we, the British Labour Movement, are saying to you

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we do not say alone. It has been said by the Pope in a broadcast to all peoples ; it has been said by the President of the United States in an appeal to the King of Italy, to Herr Hitler, and to the President of Poland. It has been said by King Leopold of the Belgians on behalf of the seven Oslo powers.

"Germany needs raw materials and food-stuffs. If war comes, she will find it very hard to obtain them. The British and French will command the seas. It is by no means certain that Germany can obtain them from the neutrals in Europe. But the British and the French will have at their disposal inexhaustible supplies of food, materials and arms from all parts of the world. You know how you have been living for years past. You know that the necessities of your life have been sacrificed to the needs of war preparation. In war Germany would once more come under rigorous naval blockade. Your standard of life will come down still further.

"We have no wish to destroy the German people. We have been, we still are, your friends. We do all in our power to tell you the truth, now, before it is too late. Remember that it is not you who want war. It is a small handful only of your rulers. Remember that it is you and we who will pay for the war—all war, with its tragic burden, falls most heavily upon the common people of all lands.

"If peace can be saved now—and it can be saved—a new Europe and a new world can be built. There is then the prospect of a friendly and peaceful co-operation of all the peoples. There can be mutual friendship and understanding built upon common sense and justice. This new Europe will

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not be the Europe of Versailles nor the Europe of Brest Litovsk. It will be a Europe free and happy because the shadow of war has been lifted from its life. Lift that shadow, as you can lift it, and the workers of Germany and the world can share fully in a new epoch of prosperity through Peace."

On September 1st Nazi Germany launched her war of conquest against Poland. There was no longer any room for doubting that, unless Hitler was confronted by the armed power of the Western Democracies, he would continue, in one direction or another, his unlawful aggression and gangster maraudings. The British Government, in fulfilment of its treaty obligations took on the role of active defender of the right of all nations to live, not precariously under the constant threats of violence and menace of aggression, but securely in the knowledge that none would seek or dare to harm them.

It did so with the wholehearted support of a united people, and with the firm and inflexible resolution of the Labour Movement behind it.

Labour's position had been clearly set out in a Manifesto issued on the first day of Poland's tragedy :

"The Nazi Government has chosen war. Deaf to the appeals of all neutral powers for peace by negotiation ; openly insistent on the partition of a State with which it had a pact of non-aggression, and

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against which, but a few months ago, it was insisting that it had no claims ; disregarding the offer of the British and French Governments to discuss all issues in a peaceful way ; it has wantonly and with set determination subjected the peoples of Europe to the final tragedy of conflict.

"The British Labour Movement has always declared that there are no international disputes incapable of settlement by peaceful negotiation. That is why it has always stood by the League of Nations. That is why it has always supported Collective Security. The British Labour Movement continues to affirm these principles.

"Equally, however, it has always insisted that aggression on the part of any Power must be resisted. It has declared that the use of force in international disputes must be made for ever impossible. The decision of the British Government to resist this latest effort of conquest by aggression on the part of Hitler therefore receives the full support of the Labour Movement in this country. It has for long criticised the policy of the National Government. It stands by that criticism. Had it been followed it believes that a very different world would now be in being. But, as it stood by Czecho-Slovakia on this principle, so British Labour stands also by Poland.

"British Labour has no quarrel with the German people. It does not seek to deprive them of any just rights to be obtained by rational and equal negotiation. It will, now that the die is cast, use all its influence and authority to secure a Peace the basis of which is in accord with the faith it holds. It will resist any attempt to use the present conflict for

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ends that sow the seeds of further War. So long as its principles animate those whom Herr Hitler has driven to resistance against his aggression, so long they can count on the support of British Labour.

"None know better than the Labour Movement the tragic folly of war ; but a stage has been reached in the development of Europe where War has been chosen by Herr Hitler as a deliberate instrument of national policy. It is impossible for Labour to acquiesce in claims supported, or conquests achieved, by this method. To do so would be an indefensible betrayal of its own vital faith.

"The British Labour Movement, therefore, calls upon all its members to stand solidly behind it in resistance to aggression. Until those who have been willing to resort to its use have been overthrown, it sees no prospect of an enduring Peace. The Movement must summon all its energy and devotion to the task of defeating the aggressor.

"British Labour has taken this stand with calmness and without passion. It will hold itself free to define in its own way the conditions of a just settlement at a later stage. It will use all its authority to build a Peace of justice which removes the causes out of which War comes. With the defeat of the aggressors, there emerges the prospect of building a better world from which the roots of economic and political grievances have been removed. The British Labour Movement will give all its strength to making the foundations of that world a secure defence of Peace and Justice."

Little more than a year had passed since the United States Secretary of State had said :

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"When freedom is destroyed over increasing areas elsewhere, our ideals of individual liberty and social institutions are jeopardised."

In the months that had followed, Nazi Germany had been guilty of new and atrocious crimes against individual and collective freedom. A position had been reached when further weakness, irresolution, concession or surrender would have proved insupportable. The nation was convinced, and Labour was convinced, that the limit of endurance and of risk had been passed, and that the time had arrived when at last, in the interests of our common civilisation, the armed forces of a great democratic people who cherish peace, freedom and justice, must be deployed in resistance to the arch-aggressor.

That is why a united British nation has been at war with Nazi Germany since Sunday, September 3rd, 1939.

## PART III

### THINGS WE HAVE TO DEFEND

#### I. A FREE PARLIAMENT

SOMEONE once declared that liberty must be earned before it can be enjoyed ; that liberty will not descend to a people but that a people must raise themselves to it. There, plainly enough, is another vital clue to why British Labour went into war against Hitlerism and all that Hitlerism stands for. Actually, of course, it is more than a clue. It is a key to the great, broad, all-embracing and sufficing reason.

When the Reichstag is summoned at Hitler's order the members attend because they have been ordered to do so. They have no part or lot in the proceedings. They are there merely to listen and to cheer. They may not criticise, they may not suggest, they may not dissent. They know the concentration camps are waiting.

When the British Parliament is called it is called because it is the will of the people that it should be. Hitlerism hates and would destroy any Parliament but one of chorus-men obeying instructions to chant alternately "Yes" and

"Heil". The men and women of Britain have won for themselves the right of a free Parliament, free expression, free criticism, and the right to play their constructive part, through Parliament, in the building of a new world.

As soon as Hitler made war—not of our seeking but of his—that right was challenged, and in a flash the challenge was answered. Labour and the great masses for whom it speaks saw that all the hard-won victories for freedom were being evilly threatened, that progress would be mercilessly stopped if Dictatorship won, that aims and aspirations still to be won by struggle would be put needless centuries ahead. When at the bidding of one man the advance of democracy was told to halt, when the blustering, dictatorial order to retreat was given, there was only one choice. Any other would have been foul betrayal not only of the present but of the past and—even more important—of the future.

Parliament as it exists to-day, and which is perhaps the one thing more than any other that Hitler wishes to destroy—because with the destruction of the symbol he loathes he would realise his fondest dreams—is the outward and visible sign to the whole world of the freedom of the British people. This freedom has taken centuries to win. As the history of our land tells, it was born in blood and suckled on suffering.



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Hating war, but loving freedom more, Labour knew that if need be it must be defended at the cost of blood and suffering. Freedom dearly won is only lightly yielded by cravens.

The British Labour Movement wanted to go on peacefully planning and building for the benefit not only of British peoples but all peoples. The light ahead was brightening and spreading. There was ordered, lawful, democratic progress by Parliamentary means, progress subject to the will and the approval, through constitutional channels, of the ordinary man and woman.

Then all this was threatened by the Dictator apostle of the old "gospel" of the sabre and the sword, mercilessly modernised into terms of bombs, tanks, gas, and "sink-without-warning" submarines. And still more mercilessly modernised into terms of preying on the materially weak who had begun to hope, if not really to believe that a man's pledged word and his witnessed bond might in the last resort be at least half-trusted.

When it became plain that the final and definite challenge had been issued, then the British Parliament took hold, and began at once to grow in power instead of, as Hitler hoped, either to demean itself or to dim the hopes which a freedom-loving people had based upon it.

Perhaps here, because the whole issue seems

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to me to hinge so much on the preservation of free-speaking and free-Parliament peoples, I may hark back to September 20th, 1939, and an Empire broadcast. There had been nearly three weeks of declared but "quiet" war. I used considered words then about Labour's attitude. They are recorded but I would like to put them on record again because, as far as I am concerned and as far as the movement and the people for which I speak are concerned, they still stand and will continue to stand until the cause of freedom is for ever secured.

"We are fighting," I said, "for a quite simple principle—that of liberty. We cannot and we will not tolerate for a moment the claim of individuals—or States—to dominate our lives through the threat or the use of force. . . . The Labour movements of the British Commonwealth of Nations (the self-governing Dominions, India and the Colonies) stand for the same ends. We have a common goal. It is freedom of thought, expression and opportunity for all, irrespective of class, colour, or creed. . . . Labour will support all reasonable measures necessary to bring the war to a successful and speedy conclusion. Labour will do so because its whole future and that of all who believe in human freedom will be determined by the result of this great—I hope final—struggle between Dictatorship

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and democracy, between Hitlerism with its forced loyalty and our simple faith that what is right will at last win by its own worth. Threats, menaces, brutality and ruthlessness will never prove anything. Labour everywhere, throughout its long history of struggle, has suffered from attempts at suppression, but it has always survived them. The reason is simple. If men believe in their hearts that they are right, they will never submit to intimidation or force. . . .”

I have repeated this because I have nothing to withdraw and something to add. Had there not been a free Parliament at Westminster I should not have been in it and I should not have been asked to go to the microphone on the most critical nights in the world's history. Nor would any other member of the Parliamentary Labour Party, because but for the fights of our forbears, carried on by gallant stalwarts some of whom are still with us there would not have been a Parliamentary Labour Party, there would have been no “working-man representation” in the House of Commons, there would still have been a narrow and a class-confined Parliament with nobody permitted directly to express the views of 8,326,131 voters, which was the number of men and women who sent Labour members to Parliament in the general election of 1935.

Parliament, as I have said, is a symbol of the

freedom which Hitler hates. Equally it is the symbol of the freedom we will defend. Not because there is now a powerful Labour Opposition. Not because there have been two Labour Governments. Not because there are going to be many other Labour Governments. But because Parliament does at all events represent the freely expressed will of the people. Nobody either in Britain or abroad should misunderstand this. Right from the beginning the Labour Party was prepared to fight Dictatorship and domination, but it maintains and will maintain its complete independence, fighting Hitlerism from whatever source it comes—from across the sea or within these islands. To understand that is to see the signpost to the central and direct avenue which leads to a full appreciation of Labour's attitude to the war.

When war and the "black-out" began, the light in the clock tower of Big Ben ceased to gleam to the physical eye. It will shine out again but however long it be, the spiritual eye of the British peoples will still see it because it signals something indestructible, something that cannot perish. When the deep notes of Big Ben boom out over the wireless they tell as they have told for years something more than the time. They remind millions of people that within arm's reach is the very centre of the British Common-

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wealth where meets the free, the practical and the symbolic Parliament which all that is represented by Hitlerism wishes to hurl to destruction.

Labour prizes Parliament, and Britain prizes it. In the early weeks of the war when many minds were disturbed and groping, Parliament justified the pride which a democratic people had in it. M.P.s who were sent to Westminster from quiet cathedral cities, from towns that perpetually hummed with industry, from mining districts where the winding-gear of the pit-shaft was sent whirring for fewer hours than might have been, from seaports and fishing centres, from the quiet rural areas, were able to speak their minds unafraid and with no Gestapo to spread its spy-web about them or to follow them to their homes.

There were 164 Labour members and there were some among them who could throw back over 65 years and remember the sensation in 1874 when the first two working-class men entered Parliament as direct representatives of their fellows. Before this happened there had been bitter fights even for the principle of working-class representation. You have, of course, to delve deep back into history to unearth the beginnings of the portent of 1874 but that is not the purpose of this book. Backed by what was then known as the Labour Representation League

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Thomas Burt and Alexander Macdonald were elected to Parliament for Morpeth and Stafford respectively. When he was seven years of age Thomas Burt had the double experience in twelve months of working at a Durham colliery for tenpence for a twelve-hour day, and seeing his father evicted from his cottage during a strike. Alexander Macdonald fared a little better in that he did not have to work underground until he was eight years old !

Before this the trade unions had begun to exert their influence in connection with Labour representation. There was a "Lib.-Lab." period, years in which the leaders of the working class were entirely Liberal in their political outlook, and saluted Gladstone. In following years came doubts, setbacks and experiments, the formation of the Social Democratic Federation, the Fabian Society, the Independent Labour Party. With all of them were associated names that have since become famous. There were still "Lib.-Lab." entanglements but soon there came a pushing-out towards independent clear-cut Labour representation in Parliament and, when Keir Hardie was elected in 1892, the *Daily Chronicle* of those days noted the event as marking a new era in politics and "a striking example of the new spirit in politics ; the first curl of the wave which is rising from the dim depths of popular life". The

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I.L.P. was the creation of Keir Hardie and it was this organisation which supplied the inspiring force of the movement that made the Labour Party.

There came stirring and movement. Signs of historic and far-reaching things. As William Morris wrote :

"What is this, the sound and rumour ? What is  
this that all men hear,  
Like the wind in hollow valleys when the storm  
is drawing near,  
Like the rolling on of ocean in the eventide of  
fear ?  
'Tis the people marching on."

Many men have heard that sound and bitterly repented paying no heed to it. Hitler must have heard it in 1939. But did he realise what it meant or did his advisers hide the significance of it from him ? Had he realised he must have quailed for there is no more terribly decisive sound than that of "the people marching on". Oppressors may bluster, bribe and bully, but once that sound is heard there is no power to silence it until right is recognised and justice done. The road may be long and hard but it leads to inevitable if delayed triumph.

In very truth the road was long enough and hard enough for the men and women who fought for Labour representation in Parliament. It is

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no part of my task here to give the historic details of how the growing trade union movement linked up with the still young political movement to bring us to the position we hold to-day. All the old familiar forces were arrayed against them and fought, as they were ordered to do, without scruple. Crippling legal decisions were made like that of the Taff Vale Judgment, which seemed to cut the ground of legality from the system of collective bargaining. Sometimes Labour was dismayed but it was never really defeated, and eventually, after long trials and tribulations, there appeared in the House of Commons after the election of 1906 (in which Balfour himself was beaten) twenty-nine Labour members with their own party organisation and bound to independence of all other parties. Balfour admitted that unless he was much mistaken that election would prove to have inaugurated a new era. He was not mistaken.

Arthur Henderson, perhaps the greatest and certainly the most single-minded organiser any party has ever had, began to build up a staff and a machine. The issue of Peers versus People was fought out and in that fight still more Labour men were sent to the House of Commons. The curling wave was still "rising from the dim depths of popular life". So it went on with great domestic political issues like Home



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Rule and Women's Suffrage rending the country. Side by side with these went great industrial struggles involving strikes and lock-outs, most of them grave, many of them bitter. In Parliament the new Labour Party, now a relatively small but cohesive and organised force fought for and won measures that gave back what had been lost in the courts. It secured in 1913 the Trade Unions Act which reasserted the right of the unions to take part in political activities and to join in financing the Labour Party. All this was part of what was now an intensified, because organised, fight for more and more freedom.

Then, in 1914, came the Great War, and of the many important pronouncements made during that period by Arthur Henderson, there are two which stand out in as clear a light to-day as they did then. One was: "Faith in brute force as an instrument for attaining national ambitions, whether right or wrong, must be destroyed. The settlement must contain all the conditions and safeguards essential to the future life and development of free people, be they large or small." The other was: "We seek a victory, but we do not seek a victory of a militarist or diplomatic nature. We seek a triumph for high principles and noble ideals. We are not influenced by Imperialist ambitions or selfish

national interests. We seek a victory, but it must be a victory for international moral and spiritual forces, finding its expression in a peace based on the inalienable rights of common humanity." What Arthur Henderson said then (it was in February 1918) the Labour Party of to-day says again.

After that war there came a few years of setback and tremendous difficulty for Labour both political and industrial. But the people, as is their habit, girded up their loins again and marched swiftly towards government. There was a Labour Government in January 1924, a Government hampered and hamstrung because it had no clear majority, but none the less a Government. So the impossible had happened. That Government was brought down within a year but five years later it was back again although still without a clear majority. Towards the end of 1931 this Government too was smashed.

The circumstances and the plottings are too recent to need recounting here. But these things must be remembered : within little more than half a century of the first two men coming into Parliament as direct representatives of the working class there had been two Labour Governments, and the rights of a free democratic people have now been given such firm foundations

(although much more still waits to be built upon them) that no challenge that involves those rights shall go unanswered. That is where British Labour stands in defence of its free Parliamentary institutions and that is where it will always stand.

It is not such a far cry in the matter of time from the thirties of the Chartists. Chartism apparently failed. But did it fail in reality? The answer is summed up in the fact that within the span of a hundred years there was a Labour Government in office. Chartism succeeded in that it spurred on and inspired the social and economic movement which increasingly disturbed the gradually awakening conscience of the country. The claims of the under-dog were advanced with more and more persistence, and practically all the Charter was long ago won: universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, equal electoral districts, payment of M.P.s, abolition of the property qualification for members. The Chartists made mistakes, of course, but the torch they kindled has never been extinguished and Hitlerism will not be permitted to extinguish it.

The first Labour Government, in office but not in power, made remarkable progress towards the realisation of a programme which envisaged the tasks of a full period of government with majority powers. Faced with obstruction and

opposition in both the Commons and the Lords, this minority Government sometimes had to accept compromise to gain what was possible in the circumstances as an alternative to still greater loss, but its legislative and administrative work was of great scope and significance.

It was the same with the second Labour Government, which was in office for just over two years and which had to meet every conceivable form of Tory obstruction designed to torpedo attempts to establish the economic and social life of the people on sound foundations. The most formidable handicap was the swift development of international crisis which plunged practically every country into economic, financial, and industrial difficulties, and which was due to world causes over which the Government could not by national action alone exercise effective control.

The vigorous peace policy initiated by the first Labour Government was restored. British influence in the League of Nations was re-established. The prestige of Great Britain in the councils of the nations rose rapidly. There was great work for disarmament and for the promotion of better understanding between the nations. That all this was afterwards wrecked was no fault of Labour which had set out to devise insurance against war. In following

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years other Governments neglected the premium dates, tore up the policy.

Unemployment, town and country slums, education, road transport and electricity re-organisation—all these and many other matters were dealt with in circumstances of the utmost difficulty. A Pensions Act redressed injustices and had the ultimate effect of granting pensions to more than 500,000 widows, old people and children who had been left out of previous legislation.

This is not the place for a detailed history of Labour's achievements either in office or in opposition as it is now, but it is of the most vital importance for the world to realise that we have fought, are fighting and will fight for the right to legislate.

British Labour could not have refused to fight Hitlerism without being false to all that it has stood for in its own country. Its case has always been based on the moral claim of every individual to conditions and opportunities enabling the living of a decent life as an individual, a worker, a parent, a citizen, upon whom the State has imposed responsibilities. To see that such a claim is met, then freedom of vote, freedom of expression, freedom to legislate must be maintained against any force either from within or without.

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Within a few hours of Britain being at war with Hitlerism, I publicly took the line that she was so at war because her people were united and steadfast in their conviction that there are cherished possessions of mankind worth defending, for without them life must be empty.

To sum up British Labour's attitude as far as its Parliamentary freedom is concerned it is sufficient to say that as it has refused to have that dearly-bought freedom whittled down by reactionaries in our own country still less will it see the Parliamentary system itself destroyed by foreign dictatorship.

### 2. OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Britain has a system of local government unequalled in the world ; and that is another thing Labour fights to defend. It is less than half a century ago that there was completed the task of weaving an ordered pattern of administration to take the place of the patchwork quilt that had hitherto served to cover and conceal the needs of industrial expansion, the problems created by the springing up of great industrial centres and the concentrations of large populations. Until then there had been a muddled, old-fashioned, and haphazard sprawling of local sanitary authorities, separate Boards and Commissions all

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nibbling ineffectively at bits of local government. Order began to grow out of chaos first when just over one hundred years ago, the Municipal Corporations Act was passed, and later when County Councils and County Boroughs were set up in 1888, to be followed by Urban District Councils and Rural District Councils in 1894.

Under this system social problems have been tackled in a large and comprehensive way and, especially during the last twenty years, there has developed a great personal side of the work devoted to the improvement of the health and general well-being of the individual citizen. Local government as we know it now affects the life of every man, woman and child in scores of different ways and the basis of it is the fundamental democratic principle that the people shall be able to take an active part in determining those things which have everyday application.

There is nothing flashy about the work. It seldom "hits the headlines". It proceeds quietly and unceasingly behind the scenes, carried on by public-spirited men and women who unselfishly and without thought of reward, give many hours of their time, and by a highly-trained and responsible army of officials.

As far as Labour is concerned, it is not too much to say that its work in local government

has been as great and as far-reaching as its work in Parliament. It has thrown up many administrators of real and marked ability, men and women who have made a study of the work they have undertaken, and who have added to their knowledge that inspiration and human drive which have made their achievements so much greater.

A few figures will give some idea of what a great and intricate network local government in England is. There are 62 County Councils, 83 County Boroughs, 300 Non-County Boroughs, and 28 Metropolitan Boroughs. In addition there are 576 Urban District Councils, 477 Rural District Councils, and a host of Parish Councils in the villages. Labour is in control of 17 of the Metropolitan Boroughs and 42 of the provincial Boroughs. Since March 1934, magnificently led by Herbert Morrison, it has been in charge of the greatest local authority in the world—London. And what changes it has brought to London !

In the urban and the rural districts Labour has won majorities in about 100—most of them in urban districts. On the L.C.C., on the Metropolitan Borough Councils, on the provincial borough authorities, and on the County Councils outside of London (three of which are held by Labour) there are approximately 4,500



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Labour men and women. Add the hundreds who have won direct representation in the urban districts, the rural districts and the parishes and it will be seen how far the free expression of democracy in the all-important task of local government has gone in less than fifty years. It is, of course, only a beginning—albeit a good one—but does any democratically-minded person think that this beginning is going to be weakly sacrificed?

And does anybody in his senses (whether he be democratically-minded or not) think that the far greater promise of the future is going to be timidly handed over without a struggle in which the irresistible and unyielding spirit of our people will be the greatest factor? We do not go on winning through, slowly perhaps, but surely and by constitutional means, to such a point as we have reached merely to shrink and to cower when somebody, or some antagonistic and murderous system, orders us to be kicked back into the kennels of centuries ago.

London supplies the world's greatest example of Labour local government. It was in 1934 that the London Labour Party won a majority and took charge of the administration of an area of 117 square miles with a population of 4,200,000. It set out, under the leadership of Herbert Morrison, to put into operation carefully

laid plans for making London not a "show place" but a city worth living in, a city, to quote Morrison, "in which virile and healthy citizens can live a full life and see their children grow up fine and strong and well".

The spectacular thing was the pulling-down of the old Waterloo Bridge and the setting in hand of the building of a new one. Former councils had played with the problem for ten years. Labour beat its opposition on the L.C.C., beat the even more powerful opposition in Parliament, and put the scheme through, boldly, courageously, and as is now admitted, soundly.

It set out to ring London with the famous "Green Belt" of parks, open spaces, and playgrounds. It cleared slums and re-housed people at an unprecedented rate. It revolutionised the educational life of children in nearly 1,500 schools, modernised the hospitals and swept away the Poor Law spirit, reorganised the ambulance service, overhauled the Public Assistance administration, and did so many other things on a sound financial basis that London approved and sent it back to rule again for a further three years.

The same sort of thing has happened in the provinces. Sheffield, in 1926, was the first great municipal borough to return a Labour majority and this important industrial centre has done

so, with one brief exception, ever since. Yorkshire, Lancashire and Durham electors have done the same thing in many districts and been thankful. So have cathedral cities like Norwich and Lincoln. Glasgow has led the way in Scotland, and in Wales both counties and boroughs have pinned their faith to Labour's efficiency in local government.

In most cases Labour, when it achieved the responsibility of rule, had to take over also from its predecessors a legacy of debt, neglect and haphazard administration. It brought financial muddle to an end and pulled municipal government back on to a sound basis.

But the great thing was that it brought a new outlook which relit the hopes of distressed areas, re-awakened the civic conscience of communities, and, in those cases where it had begun to wane, restored a faith in the future. This it did because it put the humanities first and proved that this could be done without the sacrifice of any of the principles of sound and well-balanced administration.

Ordinary working men and women took hold of Dagenham, that amazing Essex town by Thames-side which in ten years sprang from a population of 9,000 to nearly 100,000. They coped with the sudden new demands and met them marvellously.

Something should be said about the work of the Labour minorities, and in this connection the West Riding County Council supplies a remarkable example. It is concerned with a great tract of Yorkshire covering an area of more than 1,625,000 acres with a population of more than 1,500,000. In it are ten County Boroughs, 11 Non-County Boroughs, 108 Urban District Councils, 28 Rural District Councils and 265 Parish Councils. The administrative County and the County Boroughs return altogether 43 Members of Parliament. Such figures as these show the spread and far-reaching importance of local government, although admittedly the West Riding is in area the largest of the administrative counties with the exception of London.

Not long ago the public health services were the Cinderella of the council, but all that has been changed and those services have been brought right to the front of the county's administration. It is quite true to say that this and other achievements have been directly due to the constructive persistence of a strong and able Labour minority, a minority, be it remembered, that would have no chance to exist under dictatorship.

Durham is one of the few counties ruled by a Labour County Council, and out of all the English counties it would be difficult to pick one

more calculated, because of its circumstances, to provide a sterner test of the quality of government. During the years of depression it suffered dreadfully. Its main industry, coal, slumped tragically. There are thousands of Durham miners who know the bitter experience of being out of work for years. Anti-Labour council majorities had thrown up their hands and allowed the county to sink into decay.

Labour took hold and by a series of bold, constructive, far-seeing measures worked a wonderful transformation. It revolutionised the county's education system, put the feeding of necessitous children on a proper basis, spread a network of maternity and child welfare centres over the county, lifted the health services to a high level, cared for the blind, improved out of all knowledge such things as the county's roads and bridges. In a word, Labour saved Durham.

You can go all over the country—to industrial towns like Barnsley, Rotherham, St. Helens, Leeds, Wigan and others, and to cathedral cities like Norwich and Lincoln—and you will find the same story of hope being brought out of chaos, progress being made despite depression, the working of miracles by sheer courage and inspired persistence. Similarly in Wales.

At the root of it all is the fact that there is a great partnership between the local authorities

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and the central Government. The whole plan is an essential part of the democratic system. There are no local dictators, no central one. The people have a right to rule. That is what they mean to keep.

### 3. FREE TRADE UNIONS

To understand how resolutely Labour will fight for freedom in its fullest sense it is essential to realise first of all what has already blossomed from the bitter battlefields of the past and to know beyond a doubt that everything that has been won against brutally used material and economic forces will be defended. In the second place, it is essential to realise that the successful defence of freedom's gains will not be the end. The sacrifices that have been made, the lives that have been laid down, the incalculable toll of suffering and poverty that has been levied, all as the price of what is now threatened, call for more than defence.

Admittedly, that defence is the immediate and urgent thing, but what an army of ghosts would rise up to haunt us if we contented ourselves with that defence, hard and sustained though it will have to be.

The history of British Labour calls for more than that, and it is this greater call that British Labour has set out to answer.

Just over seventy years ago the Trades Union Congress was founded. Its first meeting in 1868 has proved in the event to have been one of historical importance not only in the development of trade unionism but in the widening of the political democracy of Great Britain.

The earlier struggles had been waged. The Peterloo Massacre (in which Yeomanry charged a mass demonstration of Lancashire Reformers at Manchester in 1819), the Luddite riots, and the Chartist Movement were already becoming history. For round about forty years the process of liberation had been making its humble but heroic beginnings. The Combination Laws had been battered down by men and women whose names have mostly been forgotten if ever they were known outside their own little circle—the men and women who stood with their leaders, suffering and sacrificing.

Earlier years of the 19th century had produced a few chinks of light through the industrial, social and economic black-out that had been imposed for many generations. A wider enfranchisement was just making its forced but timid appearance. New economic groups had been fighting their way through to the assertion of claim to a voice in government. But even in 1868 when the workers' organisations, bludgeoned but not beaten, formed the first Trades Union Congress,

enfranchisement was a mockery. Twelve months before this the industrial workers had no vote. The ballot was wide open to the spies and the bribers. Systematised education was non-existent and illiteracy still spread its suffocating blanket over almost everybody but "The Squire and his relations".

The vast majority of M.P.s represented property, employers, or the legal profession. Nobody had a claim to speak for Labour. Nobody bothered except the few gallant pioneers and their followers who fought in their days as great and significant a war as British Labour is fighting now.

Only 33 years before the first Trades Union Congress a Factory Commissioner was claiming that children working at a mule in a cotton mill as piecers for twelve hours a day were doing nothing for three-quarters of every minute. Hence, he argued, since they were merely watching the mules recede for three-quarters of every minute they really only worked three hours of a twelve hours day. But he did graciously add (and this is given in Home Office Papers) that if they minded two mules they worked six hours.

Insufferably long hours and incredibly low pay. Unthinkable housing conditions. Nothing that really answered to the name of education. Nothing that really answered to the name of



nutrition. Nothing that would respond to the call for decency and humanity. These were the positives and the negatives that faced the modern trade union movement just over seventy years ago when the machine age and the industrial age finally put its clamp on our people.

Looking back, of course, it is easy enough to see how these two vast changes, then only in their infancy, have in the years that have followed reacted to the prosperity of mankind. But there should have been more benefit to a greater proportion of mankind, and that is one of the things that lie at the root of Labour's attitude to the war.

The things Labour has won are being threatened. We will fight through thick and thin to retain those things. Otherwise we should be false to our trust. But we are also fighting for the things we mean to gain. If we did not do that we should be still more false to our trust. False to the memory of men and women of the early years of the 19th century, and false to the work of the men who, only just over seventy years ago, strengthened the foundations and set such a faithfully followed example to their successors that within the first four weeks of war the men and women who had built on those foundations were able to demand full consultation, equal advisory rights, equal administrative

responsibility with the Government itself and with the Departments of Whitehall in some of the matters most vitally affecting the prosecution of the war.

Perhaps this may seem a natural thing to the younger generation of Britain, to the peoples of the Dominions, to millions in other countries. But if they throw back over no more than a century and a half (and that is not much in Britain's history) they will see that while it may now be a natural thing it has become so because of the fighting experiences of the past from which springs the fighting determination that the future shall hold more.

The "humble" people of Britain have been fighting for generations for freedom. They have won a certain measure of it. But they are not content with that certain measure, and they mean to have more not merely for themselves but for the "humble" people the world over. Which makes the war, in a social and liberating sense, an "offensive" as much as a "defensive" one, because the "humble" people of all lands are threatened by a denial of their elementary rights.

When the first Trades Union Congress was held and when the signal was given for a great trade union advance the determining changes in the life of Britain had gone a long way. The

Industrial Revolution had taken place. No longer were families producing merely what they needed for themselves. The machine had taken charge. Britain had become industrialised. The factory had displaced the home workshop. Men, women and children were producing for world markets. Capitalist organisation was able to ride rough-shod over greater and more profitable stretches.

True, women and children were no longer permitted to work in mines, and nobody under eight years of age could be employed as a "half-timer". True, also, that the franchise was being gradually extended. But progress was slow, grudging and actively opposed, and it was in this atmosphere that the first Trades Union Congress met at Manchester at a time when a disturbed capitalism had summoned its forces to meet what it regarded as a menacing threat to its power. There were only thirty-four delegates and they represented a membership of less than 120,000.

The unions were small and scattered. Except for the inhuman driving in the mines and the newly-developed factories and workshops, life moved slowly. Transport facilities were meagre. Educational facilities as we know them to-day were non-existent. The field of organisation open to trade unions was limited to a relatively

narrow range of industries. But there were the first faint signs of big business organisation and they provoked the counter-signs of growing trade union organisation.

Trade unionism broke new ground as new trades and occupations arose. Sir Walter Citrine, writing in 1938 about "Seventy Years of Trade Unionism" said: "In the fundamental sense, the great trade union lesson of the entire period of seventy years covered by the Congress records is the adaptability of trade union organisation to new conditions in industry, its capacity for growth, its strong and persistent attraction for every new group of wage-earners or salaried workers whom the circumstances of their employment brought within the ambit of trade union influence".

So the trade unions grew and with them the Congress itself, giving central authority and national leadership. Too many people think of trade unions only in terms of wages and hours. But the modern trade union movement has played a tremendous part in democratic political development. It has battled away until it has reached a position where no Government dare act in anything affecting the lives of the common people without its advice and co-operation.

There have, of course, been setbacks and reverses; no war is ever won without them.

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There are evils still to be remedied, glaring injustices to be swept away, prejudices to be overcome, great new protective laws to be passed. But so much has been won that neither Hitlerism nor any form of Dictatorship shall filch the victories generations of working men and women have achieved. Wages have been forced up. Hours of labour have been forced down. Factory legislation has been pushed through Parliament after Parliament. Working conditions have been humanised. The children have to a certain extent been safeguarded. Much remains to be done, but nothing shall be lost—that is the keynote of the attitude of the British trade unions to this war.

They are in it not only to wage it but to help in directing it. They loathe war, but they loathe more the possibility of the destruction of all that their founders and builders have stood for through several generations. During the last War there was a decisive moment both for Britain and the trade union movement. What has been described as a "turning point" came when the Trades Union Congress decided to take part in the war-time administration of the nation. The importance of this can hardly be overrated. For one thing it meant a new public conception of the trade union movement. It gave the trade unions a new status. It gave them, too, vast new

responsibilities so nobly borne that trade unionism assumed a higher importance in the minds of those who until then had understood little about it. Men who had wished almost to outlaw it welcomed it. Newspapers accustomed to attack it lauded it. There came to the trade union movement a high measure of authority and power. The service rendered was ill-requited a few years later when, following the General Strike in defence of the miners, the Government passed Acts and issued Edicts designed to cripple it. But the trade union movement is too strong to be maimed, too great to be held back, and within a week or two of the outbreak of the Hitler war it was helpfully and constructively changing Government policy.

On September 13, 1939 I spoke in the House of Commons and said on behalf of the Labour Party : "We believe that in all the big problems which will have to be solved in the future Labour must be in on the ground floor. Organised industrial labour must be in at the beginning, not merely because the question of labour supply is involved, but because organised labour has a contribution to make to the wider aspects of the question, an experience which in war-time, and, indeed, in peace-time, cannot be ignored."

I went on to say : "The trade union movement is in no mood to be regarded as the poor

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relation of industry. It claims equality in the direction of policy as well as in administration with the employers and with the State Departments concerned."

A week later the Government put forward its Ministry of Supply scheme, which was obviously and ludicrously inadequate to meet the needs of the nation at war. There was a failure to understand that Labour had a claim to assist in making and carrying out major policy, that Labour was a living, constructive force with a powerful contribution to make to the national cause, that only by its direct and responsible aid could the great task be successfully accomplished.

The trade unions, represented by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, had already realised the issues at stake in the war forced on us by Hitlerism and aggression. They knew the supreme victory-winning importance of swift, plentiful, well-organised, never-failing supplies of war material, and they said in effect: "Here we are with our knowledge, our resources and our willingness, but all these things must be properly used for the national well-being and for that to be done we must have an equal say in the manner and the method of using them."

There was almost a "major political crisis". The Government recognised the power and the

importance of the trade union movement, and brought Labour in "on the ground floor". That is the measure not only of the value of trade union co-operation in direction and administration, but the measure also of the height of the point to which modern trade unionism has climbed in the State's affairs. Down through the years the trade unions have had to fight almost month by month on great human issues. They have won their victories and suffered their losses. But they have fought. And now, recognised and welcomed as they have never been before, they are fighting again on the same old familiar ground and against the same old familiar enemies—serfdom, oppression, aggression, domination and dictatorship. Those are the enemies that will line up the British trade unions at any time. But this must be understood: the trade unions will fight those enemies whether they rise up from abroad or at home. And when what is represented by Hitlerism is vanquished as, of course, it will be, then that is not necessarily the end of trade unionism's fight, which is for such things as justice, freedom, liberty and decency. Trade unionism will not have any little Hitlers at home.

Things have moved since the first Trades Union Congress seventy-one years ago. As I have said, in 1868 there were 34 delegates representing fewer than 120,000 members. If



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a Congress were held to-day there would be about 700 delegates representing a membership of approximately 5,000,000. These 5,000,000 know that a Hitler dictatorship in this country would mean the sweeping-away of discussion, the abolition of industrial organisations, the burgling of the funds of trade unions, and the sending of their leaders and active members either to the headsmen's blocks or to the concentration camps. They know this also, that only Socialist and trade union organisation can meet dictatorship organisation because it means the mobilising of the whole of our material as well as moral resources behind the national cause. The dictator seeks to impose his own personal will. The system that Labour stands for subordinates personal interests and ambitions to the public good reflected by what a free public opinion demands.

The full measure of trade unionism's participation in the war against Hitlerism as a directing and organising force will appear as the struggle develops, but in the early days of the conflict it was recognised that when democracy fights totalitarianism it must do so with an economic organisation as definitely planned, as purposeful, as swift in decision and as effective in operation as anything that lies in the wit of dictatorship to devise or deliver. Seeing its course clear and

realising the incalculable things it had to defend, it was in that spirit that British trade unionism approached the war problems and is helping to solve them.

## 4. THE INDUSTRIAL TOWNS AND PORTS

There are men in the House of Commons who went to work in coal mines, cotton mills or brick-yards when they were children of eight or ten years of age. They have taken part in the successful struggle that has saved their children from being made to do the same thing. They have done it by upholding and insisting on the preservation of a democratic system which enables them to be in Parliament because of the freely-expressed will of the people.

Only a few weeks before Hitler started war George Tomlinson, a 49-year-old Lancashire man, stood up in the House of Commons and startled people by saying that in the early morning when he was eleven years old he "walked to work leaning on the arm of my father and finishing my sleep on the way across the field to the factory." He added: "It meant 2s. 3d. a week in a home of seven people where the total income was 26s., and the 2s. 3d. made it easier for my mother to balance the family budget."

There are several important things about such

a stark revelation as this. One is that it is no longer possible for a little boy to be hiked out of bed and sent to work, half asleep, leaning on the arm of his father. Another is that such a little boy, now grown to manhood, has the opportunity of taking part in framing his country's laws so as to make impossible the repetition of the things under which he suffered. And another is that were Hitlerism to triumph such freedom of opportunity, such freedom of expression and such freedom of legislation would be strangled.

There still has to be striving for greater and finer things, but think once more how much it means merely to preserve the ground we have consolidated. Look at the miners. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the wage of the coal-getter was about 2s. 2d. for a shift of twelve hours. Even in the best coalfields none ever got more than 15s. a week, and most of the men who hewed the coal in far more dangerous conditions than exist to-day were paid from 10s. to 12s. a week.

The casualty lists were appalling. Miners were killed by the thousand every year and injured by the ten thousand. They were "bound" to their employment, and were in danger of arrest and imprisonment for breaking the bond. They were made to buy what they needed from shops owned by the colliery proprietors, given stamped

tickets instead of money, for exchange at the shops on the running of which their bosses made a profit.

They had to live in foul little cottages also owned by the colliery managements, and if there was a dispute they were turned out into the dirty little lanes to fend for themselves and their wives and families as best they could. Trade unionism was banned, and miners who tried to organise were black-listed and victimised.

I take the following, which refers to less than a hundred years ago, from *An Economic History of England*, by Charlotte M. Waters : "Boys were employed in all mines, girls in many districts. Their chief business was as trappers or fillers. As trappers they had to shut and open the doors on which the ventilation and safety of the whole mine depended. This responsible work was done by children from five to eight years of age, sitting twelve hours in the dark." In the Report of the Commission on Children's Employment in 1842 a girl is quoted thus : "I'm a trapper in the Gamber Pit. I have to trap without a light, and I'm scared. I go at four and sometimes half-past three in the morning, and come out at five and half-past. I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark. I dare not sing then."

This girl told her story to the Commission on

Children's Employment in 1842, and another witness was a South Wales boy, aged  $7\frac{1}{2}$ . The same book, giving bits from his evidence and commenting on them, says: "I been down almost three years. When I first went down I couldn't keep my eyes open. I don't fall asleep now. I smokes my pipe; smokes half a quartern a week." That is what the boy said.

This is what the author added: "The same Commission describes the lot of the fillers. These boys and girls filled the trucks with the coal the men had hewn and pushed them along to the foot of the shaft. In some mines they were harnessed to the truck, and drew it. They were joined to the truck by a girdle with a chain that passed between their legs, and so they crawled, dragging the truck. We are told that not many under six or seven years of age were employed in this particular way. Some of the passages were only eighteen inches high. These were the conditions in 1842; they had been worse earlier."

That was only as far back as 1842, not so very long after the time that boy sweeps were apprenticed at four or five years old and forced up chimneys by the cruelty of their masters, who sometimes even lit fires at their feet to make them scramble more quickly through the winding and sooty ways that led them first to the chimney

tops, and then quickly and inevitably to disease and early deformities and death.

Miners battled along against a cheating system of fines that meant for many of them practically no wage at all. There is one recorded case of a coal-getter whose wage amounted to 6s. for the week, and his fines to 22s. The scales were "tipped" in those days ; there were no checkweighmen. Safety regulations and inspection of mines were fantastic and meaningless things.

Gradually the exposure of inhuman conditions took effect on the public conscience. Even the most rudimentary Acts were passed by timid and fearful Parliaments just beginning to experience the feeling of having their class domination torn from them. Naked men who had been hewing coal for a few shillings a week and found their tubs robbed by all sorts of tricks began to get more fair treatment by the appointment of checkweighmen, but even that did not come until 1860, and as recently as that there were great fights against evasion by the coal-owners and for the establishment not only of complete freedom of choice by the miners of their checkweighmen, but the complete independence of the checkweighman in his job.

So, slowly but surely, the miners struggled out of some of their most appalling conditions, and effective trade union organisation arose in

the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. Agitation produced a measure of public sympathy heightened by a series of disastrous explosions. Safety for the miners became a popular cry, and in 1850 the first halting steps towards proper inspection of coal mines were taken by the passing of an Act in the face of much opposition.

Year by year the work was carried on, often in circumstances of almost incredible difficulty. Legislation always lagged far behind the miners' programme, but a fighting organisation with a grand fighting membership never acknowledged defeat, and used setback as the spur for further effort.

The miners now have a strong trade union in the country and a team of M.P.s in the House of Commons ready to do battle with any of the other parties. They are up against reactionary employers as they always have been, and they are up against reactionary politicians, but the miner now plays a greater part in national life than ever he did before, and has won for himself a place high in the esteem and admiration of the people.

See him in an industrial dispute—dogged, unyielding, and suffering privation with his wife and children, simply because he knows his cause is just. Or see him when there has been a pit

disaster leaping to join a rescue gang in order to go down again into the inferno from which he has just escaped. Or see him just at his ordinary day's work, facing the hourly possibility of death or mutilation merely as part of the general routine. He is not, of course, paid enough. He still works too many hours.

He is in an industry which is still haphazard and exploited. He knows that more safety-measures must be put into operation. He knows that pits are idle when they need not be, that scores of thousands of his comrades are out of work or on short time when there is no real reason why they should not be fully employed. But he knows, too, that he has won the right to bargain, the right to force his unanswerable case, both industrially and politically, and he is not the sort of man to forgo that right at anybody's bidding.

Pass from coal to cotton, and there is the same story of a groping-up from conditions tantamount to dark and dismal slavery. Cotton was an industry heavily affected by the beginning of trade expansion in the eighteenth century. There came capitalist control and the factory system, and with them the first reaching-out for factory legislation. Here, to begin with, was a legacy from the brutalities of the old Poor Law system, which regarded pauper children as public



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nuisances, to be got off the rates and rid-of. They were turned into little drudges wholly at the mercy of their masters, and living in conditions compared with which modern prisons would be Paradises.

From the beginning of the definite movement to deal with juvenile employment in the cotton mills it took twenty-five years to secure for the children a 69-hour working week. That was done by the Factory Act of 1833, which represented the first effective approach to the legislative control of industry that developed so much during the succeeding hundred years.

Gradually, very gradually, the inhuman conditions of the industry were dealt with, but it took years and three Acts of Parliament to reduce, by the year 1875, the legal working week to sixty hours. So it went on. The cotton operatives built up their particular form of organisation with unions in federal association. It is, perhaps, a complicated machine, but it has worked wonders even in the lifetime of men still with us and still working and fighting.

There is a similar story to be told of the textile operatives other than those concerned with cotton. Another chapter of this book deals more particularly with what has been done to rescue women and children from the inhuman oppression of the old days and with the further

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safeguards that are still necessary to provide for them. The interests of the women and children must of necessity bulk largely in the tale of freedom won and the campaign for the greater freedom of the future.

What of the wives and families of the men of the mercantile marine and the fishing fleets? They stay ashore waiting and wondering while their menfolk sail perilous seas fetching cargoes of food or, in the case of the trawler crews, sweeping either for fish or for enemy mines. These are the men whose grandfathers (and, indeed, whose fathers) helped to start the rebellion against a system which sent undermanned and unseaworthy ships to cross the oceans.

They themselves still have to rebel against evil and unnecessarily dangerous conditions. Slums of the sea still exist, but there would be fouler slums of the sea if the freedom of organisation which these men and their forebears have gained were taken away. Admittedly, pay is still deplorably low, undermanning is still, even in these days, serious. Accommodation for crews is still inadequate. Sanitation in far too many ships is of a standard of such bestial inadequacy that no shoregoing sanitary inspector would tolerate it in the tiniest village.

British seamen know all this, and so does

British Labour. But we know also that bad as conditions now admittedly are, they would revert to a state of things a thousandfold worse if Hitlerism triumphed and men were made to do merely what they are told to do. Why do men of the British merchant service set out to sea in these days of incalculable peril?

Why do the trawler crews go mine-sweeping? Because it is their job? Yes. Because they get some sort of livelihood by doing so? Yes. Because they are born, bred and fashioned to the sea and its delights and dangers? Yes. But more than all these things—far more—they have in them that salt savour which makes them say in saltier terms than are permissible in a book that they will sail the seven seas seventy times rather than knuckle-down to a system that would in effect whip them back into the position of galley-slaves.

No one who knows anything about the industrial, the agrarian, and the general economic history of Britain would make the claim that all the reforms have been won unaided by the under-dogs. But it is indisputable that the under-dogs have always led the attack, that they have barked so furiously and sometimes bitten so deeply as to make it impossible for them any longer to be ignored. That can be traced down through many, many years.

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There have been zealous pioneers drawn from other classes—great-hearted men and women who have lent their aid and risked and suffered material loss, social ostracism, and physical suffering. But at the root of it all there has been by the common people the surge away from serfdom, sometimes the almost desperate clawing after comradeship.

British seamen do not wish German seamen to drown any more than they wish themselves to be drowned. British miners do not wish to see German miners harnessed and heckled and harried. British fishermen want to go out for fish instead of death-dealing explosives.

British women do not wish other women to starve and suffer and to see their babies perish. Go through the whole great list—the railwaymen and the other transport workers ; the shipwrights, the boilermakers, and the bargemen ; the engineers, the iron and steel workers ; the builders, the boot makers and the tailors ; the printers, the glass and pottery workers and the painters ; the shop assistants and the men and women who distribute the wares ; the men on the land, the public employees and the vast army of general labourers.

The dearest desire of all these and many others is to live in peace, to enjoy freedom, to better their conditions, to serve as well as to receive,

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to maintain opportunity and gain more, to win through to Liberty, Fraternity, Equality.

The ordinary men and women of Britain do not want these precious things merely for themselves. They are ready and willing to share them. But, menaced as they are, they are equally ready and willing to defend what they themselves have won for themselves.

### 5. THE CO-OPERATORS

Among the early acts of Hitlerism in Germany and Austria was the smashing of the Co-operative movement. While this book is being written the movement is being "liquidated" in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Spain. In Italy when the old free democratic movement was wound up there was substituted for it a kind of organisation which did not allow the free association which we enjoy in Britain. Does anybody doubt that if Hitler or the system he represents came through this war in conquering triumph co-operation would be among the first of the great working-class movements to suffer destruction?

Hitlerism has gone too far along its planned programme of persecution not to do in one country what it has done in others if it has the chance. Let no one imagine that Britain's free institutions would escape the smashing hammer-

blows of a victorious dictatorship. British Labour, at all events, knows that they would not, and British Labour, fighting not only for itself, would see the people of other countries in a position to restore their free institutions if they wish to do so.

The British co-operative movement has been the pioneer. It has demonstrated amazingly what working-class organisation can achieve. It has become one of the biggest, if not the biggest, trading organisation in the British Empire. Even in terms of figures its size is staggering, for it has 8,750,000 members, its share and loan capital is over £200,000,000, its retail trading turnover is nearly £270,000,000 a year, and its annual wholesale and productive turnover is £140,000,000. It employs 375,000 workers, and practically the whole of them are members of trade unions, whereas in the competitive distributive concerns in this country less than six per cent of the employees are trade unionists.

British co-operation has set an example to the world of how to run a great business enterprise on a purely democratic basis so combining efficiency with idealism that it produces the practical result of saving the consumers about £28,000,000 a year.

But more important than this is the fact that it provides a training ground for democracy which is perhaps without precedent. In its

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quarterly meetings of shareholders, its guilds for men and women, its district conferences, and its annual congress, the "ordinary" person takes full share. The movement stands for the principle of "Each for all and all for each", and therefore for the ownership by the common people of the necessary means of life.

It achieves its objects to the benefit of the community, and to quote the words of a Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is one of the most stabilising and steadying influences in the life of the nation. This was said only a few years ago, during a Tory attack on the co-operative movement, by Sir Robert Horne, now Lord Horne, and a "big business" man with a row of company directorships.

Co-operation touches every phase of the lives of the people. There is far more concerned than such material facts as that in consumer-ownership it has 15,000 stores, 300 warehouses, and productive factories, a bank of its own, an insurance society, and a national newspaper.

There is a co-operative college which serves the dual purpose of giving education of a utility character to employees and adult education along co-operative and citizenship lines. There is a linking-up with the work of Ruskin College. Correspondence classes are run all over the country. Practically all the societies have

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educational funds and run local meetings and classes.

So that, apart from the shops and the stores, apart from the facts that the co-operative movement is a tremendously important unit in Empire trade and possibly the biggest employer of labour in Britain, there are the intangible things for which co-operation stands.

It cannot be denied that co-operation has made an almost incalculable contribution to the social welfare of the British people. When the Rochdale pioneers saw unerringly that the poor were unnecessarily made to suffer their poverty they set about in a business-like fashion to remedy as far as they could the material poverty, and since then millions of people have had cause to bless them.

But they did more. They sowed the seeds which have helped to produce a great upward curve in the standard of living and, what is equally important, quality standards of food.

If they could look back now they would get a glimpse of how well they worked if they read the following passage from *England: Cradle of Co-operation*, by Sydney R. Elliott: "Co-operation has done as much to abolish 'the working man' as to elevate him. For forty years before the men of Great Britain won adult male suffrage, and for three-quarters of a century before



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universal suffrage was attained, the co-operative movement endowed every man and woman within its boundaries with every privilege of democracy and equality. Ninety years ago it was unthinkable that differences in the rewards did not demonstrate also differences in the quality, even in the texture, of human beings. As late as the turn of the present century it was difficult to imagine the labourer as a scholar, or the scholar as a labourer. That compound of fear and envy then called respect applied to function as well as to ownership in the Capitalist State. The co-operative boardroom and the co-operative classroom uprooted both types of snobbery to the great enrichment of the nation. At any given moment, in management committees, educational committees, political societies, men's and women's guilds and a score of other co-operative agencies there are upwards of 30,000 citizens exercising the arts of government. Familiar with the conduct of business, they are neither palsied by ignorance nor galvanised into irresponsible action when confronted with grave issues. They bridge the gulf between the ideals of the propagandist and the realities of the administrator. They give to the mass of democracy the quality which once was the possession of the few, and citizenship is honoured and glorified by their gift."

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Like the Labour Party and the trade unions, the co-operative movement wishes society to be based on service and labour rather than on private profit and property, but methods differ although there is great agreement on policy. There is an effective group of Co-operative M.P.s in the House of Commons to-day, but it was not until 1918 that the first one was sent there. They are in helpful and valuable alliance with the Labour Party, and they know, in these days perhaps more than ever, that political neutrality is dangerous, if not impossible.

The campaign for direct co-operative representation in Parliament has led to considerable political development, and the Co-operative Party, which now has an affiliated membership of more than five millions, has witnessed many advances since its formation in 1919. As early as mid-October 1939, it issued a manifesto on war aims, in which it proved that at all times its policy had been framed for the specific purpose of avoiding the disaster to civilised nations of the outbreak of war, and that it was completely divorced from any idea of national or imperial aggrandisement. The policy, said the manifesto, was "based on the application of the principles of co-operation and mutuality to make permanent peace possible by the removal of economic and political grievances and the

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establishment of freedom and justice for all nations, large and small."

Another statement in this manifesto was: "The Co-operative Party, from its traditions and decisions as a peace party recognises now, as always, the vital importance of bringing real peace to Europe and the world at the very earliest possible moment. It must be stated, however, that the establishment and the maintenance of real peace depend upon the recognition of the principle of justice, and the right of all peoples to live in freedom and in the enjoyment of a security which is permanent. Nor does it hesitate to recognise that the maintenance of that security must depend upon the determination of the peoples to take effective collective action against any aggressor who would destroy it. The Co-operative Party must and will examine peace proposals from wheresoever these may emanate. It has no antipathy to the German people, and recognises the right of the citizens of that country to freedom, justice and peace equally with ourselves. It must also follow, however, that in the examination of peace proposals we must be satisfied as to the bona fides of those who make the proposals and of the guarantees offered."

The Co-operative Party summed up its attitude by saying to the German people that a

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satisfactory and lasting peace could be negotiated (a) by a German Government which is prepared to restore to Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland their rights as independent nations ; (b) by a German Government which is prepared to give effective guarantees that force will not be used as an instrument of national policy for aggression against other States ; (c) by a German Government which will be prepared to co-operate with all other nations in the building-up of a reconstructed League or Federation of Nations to join with them in the guaranteed security of the peoples of the world."

The Co-operative Party went on to declare that if a German Government would negotiate peace upon this basis the Party would work at all times to secure full justice for the German as for all other peoples, and the right of free association. To this end, it added, it would seek by a world conference and by peace pacts the peaceful solution of political, economic, territorial and racial problems, and finally with the establishment of collective security, general and progressive disarmament, releasing the economic forces of the nations for the raising of the standards of life of all the peoples of the world of whatever race or clime.

The international aspect of co-operation must not be overlooked. The International

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Co-operative Alliance has as its general object the advancement of mutuality throughout the world as a means of settling economic difficulties and avoiding war. All this dictatorship would throw overboard. "Each for all and all for each" is unrealisable by aggression or under Hitlerism, and that is a further illustration of why British democracy fights.

### 6. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Only one generation ago little children were being victimised in factories and the sweet-shops of the slums. To-day a progressive local authority in Britain can ensure that a child of 14 or 15 years starts out in the world healthy, properly fed, with a basis of education, with an opportunity of using all his or her powers, and with the means of developing them at the technical schools or the universities.

Less than a century ago young children from five years of age and upwards worked in mines and factories from twelve to sixteen hours a day. There were recorded cases in which they worked for thirty-five hours on end with only short breaks for meals. As for women, as recently as 1906 official reports gave the full-time earnings of an adult working woman as 15s. 5d. in the textile trades, 13s. 6d. in the clothing trades, 12s. 8d.

in the metal trades, 12s. 2d. in the printing trades, 11s. 10d. in the pottery and chemical trades, 11s. 3d. in the food and tobacco trades.

There was a brutal system of fining in some trades which knocked shillings out of these pitiful wage packets, and the conditions under which the little pittances were earned were revoltingly indecent. Actually the position was worse than the official disclosures indicated, for they were based on voluntary information which represented only half of the trades concerned, and Mr. Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield) estimated that during the year before the Great War the average net earnings of an adult woman, taking all the trades together, were only 10s. 10½d. a week. And up to 1909 women slaving at Cradley Heath forges and making chains were "doing well" to earn 7s. or 8s. in a fifty-hour week.

So recently was it then that women and children were to all intents and purposes slaves in the industrial market, mere tools for the purpose of profit-making. But what a change has come over the scene even in one generation by reason of the determination of a free and democratic people. There are still bad things, but as Edmund Burke said: "There is a time when men will not suffer bad things because their ancestors suffered worse," and this is one of the times.

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The women and the children of Britain have still much to gain when Hitlerism is vanquished. They would be cast back into the outer darkness were Hitlerism to be victorious. They and their fate supply another reason, if another is needed, to explain why we fight. So much has been done that shall not be destroyed. If it were destroyed the things that remain to be done could not be done.

Broadly speaking, the exploiting employers a hundred years ago saw a chance of seizing on the growth of industrialism by giving a "minimum wage" not to an individual but to a family. They saw that, by using the men, their wives, and their children, and paying them as a unit, a case could be made and the profits swollen at the same time. The plan was tried viciously and successfully in the textile industry until the workers began to realise that, even if they gave the whole of the working time of themselves and their families, they could still not get enough.

The fathers were struggling against impossible conditions. The mothers were distracted because they had to strive to keep little homes together while working as long as their husbands. The children wondered and worked. And eventually, when the horror had reached its peak, the conscience of the nation found itself being disturbed not only by the actual working class and

their revolt, but by men like Robert Owen and Lord Shaftesbury.

In 1844 a Factory Act made it illegal to employ women and young persons between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. in textile factories. It also introduced the system of half-timers, under which children from eight years old were allowed to work six-and-a-half hours a day, and had at least ten hours' schooling a week. A reform like this sounds a little grim, perhaps, but think how grim things must have been when even this was regarded as reform. As there was practically no real system of inspection the Act was, of course, blatantly evaded. Employers all over the country not only dodged it, but openly pooh-poohed it.

Three years later there came another Act, bringing the working day in the textile industry down to ten hours, and then the workers had to wait until 1864 and 1867 for further Acts which extended the ten-hour day and general control to various other trades, and also gave certain forms of protection against injury and disease. These Acts also guaranteed meal-times and strengthened the system of Home Office inspection, especially in relation to children.

How hard the struggle was may be gathered from the fact that it was not until 1878 that there came an Act prohibiting the workshop employment of children under eight years, but half-time



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was still permitted for children between eight and thirteen. As late as 1910 Parliament forbade all street trading for young children. Eventually, in 1920, came an Act abolishing every kind of work for children under 14 years. Until then the half-time system had persisted, and in 1913, of a total of 71,718 school children who were employed during part of the ordinary school hours, and who received instruction during the remainder, 41,014 were from Lancashire and 19,679 from Yorkshire.

Up to 1909 the shocking conditions of the home work system had been allowed to continue, and it was not until Mary Macarthur, in a flaming campaign, concentrated attention on this issue, that the country was made ready not only to accept, but to demand, the first of the Trade Boards Acts.

During the investigations that went on just before the passing of this Act there were revelations which many people now (only thirty years later) will find it difficult to believe. Mary Agnes Hamilton, in her book *Mary Macarthur: A Biographical Sketch*, writes that Mary Macarthur "had often been struck by curious advertisements appearing in the papers to the effect that a baby outfit was for sale. Now she sent for one of these outfits, and traced the clothes to where they were made. This took her into one of the worst slums

of London, where she found a girl making little lace-trimmed garments by the dozen at the rate of one penny each. The girl had incipient diphtheria ; so poor that she possessed no bedclothes, she would cover herself at night with the baby linen she was stitching. As the result of handling the garments, Mary herself got diphtheria, and had to spend six weeks in hospital. It was, as she afterwards said, worth while for she was able to bring home to the Committee and to the public in the most vivid way some of the consequences of sweating. When they saw it as setting death in the folds of a baby's robe they shuddered."

There were babies in cellars and tenement rooms trying to stick labels on match boxes made by their mothers and slightly older sisters, girls working at lace-finishing for as little as 5s. a week, and others at shirt-making for 3s. a week. The first Act was restricted in its scope, and dealt only with the worst of the sweated industries, but it did provide for minimum standards of pay, and social investigators discovered that with the increase in the purchasing power of the workers the children were better fed and clothed, and the standard of manners and comfort in the localities affected rose.

The second Trade Boards Act in 1918 provided for the establishment of the Boards in any

industry which had no effective machinery for the regulation of wages and conditions. There are now about fifty of such Boards, and a trade union statement issued not long ago said it was beyond doubt that these Boards have done much for the bottom-dog in industry, adding : "they have, so far as they have been applied, fixed a limit beyond which he cannot fall. In so doing the Boards have not only done service to workers in the unorganised and low-paid trades, but have provided a real safeguard for workers as a whole, including those in the larger organised trades. A 'pocket' of sweating is a drag on the wages market, and a constant and direct source of danger to those better-paid workers who, on the industrial map, immediately surround the 'pocket'. Less obviously and less calculably, but not the less certainly, does the influence of such a 'pocket' spread beyond the field immediately surrounding it until, if there be sufficient 'pockets' in sufficient trades the whole wages structure may be threatened."

Further Trade Boards are needed, but a great amount has been accomplished by those that exist. All the time, of course, there has been the increasing organisation of women in trade unions, but one thing particularly to be borne in mind in this chapter is the evolution of the British boy and girl as we know them to-day from the bullied

and profit-making little instruments that their counterparts were not long ago.

The days are gone when women and children can be viciously exploited by greedy employers to force down wages and standards of living, but they have not long gone, and they shall never come back. There was a time when vast numbers of children who were not killed by the conditions in which they were made to live and work had disease and deformity pumped into their young bodies, when they were turned into potential if not actual criminals, and when (in desperate ignorance or rebelliousness about which they were incapable of reasoning) they were cast indiscriminately into common jails if they lapsed.

It was not until 1857 that we stopped sending child delinquents under sixteen to the ordinary prisons and started sending them to reformatories and industrial schools. That change marked the beginning of the realisation that it was inhuman and uneconomic nonsense merely to punish the young and spend no thought, time, trouble or money on reforming and educating them. We muddled on harshly and still only half-understandingly. Punishment still outweighed cure and training. The germ of the new idea was there, but for years the "hit them, not help them" spirit persisted. It was still necessary to fight for the recognition of a child's

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right to food, health, education and opportunity, and that lay behind the timidity with which the earlier steps in dealing with juvenile delinquency were taken. Even now we have not fully achieved all that is desirable, but we have travelled great distances—so great that there is not a soul in this country to-day who would dare publicly to deny the rights we claim for the children.

Big changes in the general view about juvenile delinquency were observable round about 1923, and remarkable developments in a more humane treatment (including the probation system) have taken place during the last sixteen years. Labour workers, and particularly the women, have fought successfully to get more Labour men and women magistrates, to get greater representation on committees concerned with tribunals and institutions dealing with children. The present Home Office Schools and Remand Homes may not be ideal, but they do in a great number of cases give unfortunate children a real chance. Labour women are still fighting hard for further improvements in treatment and conditions of delinquent children.

The Ministry of Health was set up in 1918 largely as the result of the activities of the Women's Labour League, which had been intensely concerned with securing national responsibility for the health of the nation, and

particularly for the health of the children. The Maternity and Child Welfare Act of the same year was also due to the work of Labour women who determined to improve the restricted schemes of maternity benefit contained in the 1911 and 1913 Insurance Acts under which some mothers got 30s., and others, who were supposed beneficiaries, got nothing. No security of proper medical attention was provided until the 1918 Act, no real right to get ante-natal treatment. Poor mothers were confined in unspeakable conditions, and they and their babies died off in appalling numbers. They had no legal claim on the State to be "looked after". It was a case of going to the sixpenny doctor. The Women's Labour League put up a noble fight, and eventually the Maternity and Child Welfare Act passed through the 1918 Parliament.

In this necessarily brief and sketchy summary of why British Labour fights because of the children some reference must be made to the growth of the educational system. In 1833 there was the first Government grant for education of £20,000 for school buildings—a sum which is now spent on armaments in a few seconds. In 1880 there was compulsory education for children of from five to eleven years. In 1891 there came free education in all elementary schools, and the age was extended to twelve years. By 1906 we

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had gone so far that local authorities were permitted to feed necessitous children on school attendance days. In the year the last Great War broke out there was another School Meals Act which extended permissive feeding to week-ends and holidays.

In the year that the Great War ended, there was an Education Act which took the first official steps towards nursery schools and open-air schools, and three years later there was another one giving all local authorities powers to set up these schools in their areas and to receive grants from the Government for so doing. So was helped to fruition the pioneering work of Margaret McMillan with her nursery school at Deptford, where 80 per cent of the children of two years of age have been shown to suffer from rickets, and where all have been cured within eighteen months.

There are now nursery schools, open-air schools, periodic medical examinations of children, dental treatment, and all the hundred-and-one things that go with the proper care of the child, spread all over the country where there are forward-looking local authorities. There have been vast changes in the nursing and medical services. A six years' fight for milk for children ended successfully in 1937, though even now the provision is only "permissive" and rests in the discretion of the local authorities.

Women won the vote for themselves. They have won a certain amount of industrial freedom and better economic conditions. They have established their claim to equality both inside Parliament and outside it. They have seen food, health and opportunity won for their children. Neither Hitler nor any other aggressor need ask British Labour women if they are willing to lose, at the bidding of a dictator, what they have gained.

## 7. IN RURAL ENGLAND

At the end of the first week of October 1939 (which was the fifth week of the war against Hitlerism), it was announced that Dorset farm-workers had been conceded an increase in wages. Like their fellow farm-workers all over England they had asked for a minimum standard wage of £2 a week. What they were actually granted was an increase from 34s. to 35s. The concession was made at Dorchester, one of the pleasant and friendly country towns where most men are Tories, and where they show you with equal pride either Roman remains or the lodgings of Bloody Judge Jeffreys.

Now and then you will happen on somebody who mentions Thomas Hardy or William Barnes, the Dorset poet. Or Nelson's Hardy, to whose memory a monument stands on the top of a



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high hill dominating the southern and western parts of the county.

Seven or eight miles out from Dorchester, in a tiny village, there is another memorial. It does not announce its presence. The unknowing might pass it unnoticed. It consists of cottages which house nine aged trade unionists and their wives.

Just over a century ago in the same Dorchester where in the fifth week of the war against Hitlerism a County Agricultural Wages Committee put up farm workers' wages from 34s. a week to 35s., six men were sentenced to seven years' transportation because they had made a sworn agreement to act together in trying to lift wages from 7s. a week to 10s. The story of George Loveless and his fellow Tolpuddle Martyrs is now so well known that it is not necessary in this book to recount it. But there was the savagery and the foul, inhuman persecution that pursued agricultural workers until they were of no more account—if as much—as the cattle in the fields. On the day when he and his fellows were condemned, George Loveless wrote:

"We raise the watchword 'Liberty' ;  
We will, we will, we will be free."

Then the six of them were hauled off to live

for a month and a half in the convict hulks at Portsmouth, chained and subjected to the uttermost beastlinesses before they were deported to be chained again and degraded again.

Now what was all this about? According to Marjorie M. Firth and Arthur W. Hopkinson in their book, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs*, George Lovell and his friends were "in revolt against the social, religious and economic tyranny which kept them slaves in fact, if not in name. But they were men who fought for something rather than against something, constructive not destructive revolutionaries. In religion, though bitter and rather unfair in their wholesale condemnation of the Church, they stood for something positive, the freedom of each individual in direct approach to God. So, too, in their claim to the right of collective bargaining to secure a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, they were inspired by the thought of economic freedom for themselves and their families. And if they were not prepared to play the part of sycophant to the squire and the parson it was because they felt it to be a degradation of their ideal of freedom."

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a spurt in agricultural workers' organisation, but by the end of the century it had faded away to such an extent that only a

few hundreds of members were left. Then Norfolk took a hand when its men were working practically from dawn till dusk for 10s. a week. The movement took on new life, and spread from the eastern counties all over the country. Before the Great War wages were still less than £1 a week with hours varying from 66 to 72. In 1914 official estimates put cash wages as ranging between 13s. and 21s. over the whole country, plus certain allowances, and the farm workers had then had the vote for only thirty years. During the War wages leaped only to sink again to nearly pre-War levels.

Since the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act of 1924 there has been legal fixation of wages through county committees, and by a six-penny increase here, a shilling increase there, and the cutting-off of an hour or two a week there has been a slow climb to better conditions. But the fact remains that at the end of 1939 it still remained necessary to carry on a national campaign for a minimum standard rate of £2 a week.

Some people may ask what all this has to do with Labour and its attitude to the war. The answer is simple enough, but before giving it let me quote a few "human reports" sent to me by a friend of mine, a trained investigator, who spent several weeks of the summer and early

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autumn of 1939 making detailed enquiries into the conditions of the farm workers of England.

(1) "I like my supper. It's the only time I get a bit of peace. At ordinary dinner-time I often forget my own. Some people don't believe it, but I really do forget, and then, when I remember, it's all gone."

She said it quite simply without realising the drama of it, without whining, without complaining. But presently, with a little catch in her voice, she said: "Oh! It would be nice if we could get a bit more."

She was a 41-year-old farm worker's wife in a Yorkshire village. In some parts of Yorkshire the farm worker is lucky enough to get a 36/- a week minimum. This woman's husband got 37/-. She had six children whose ages were 14, 12, 11, 9, 7, 1½. When I saw her the 14-year-old had just started going off to work on the farm with his father, starting-time being 6.40 a.m., and finishing-time 5 p.m. The farmer wanted the boy (whose wage was 14/- a week) to work overtime at 3½d. an hour, but the mother wouldn't agree.

The cottage was spotlessly clean but had only two bedrooms for the eight of them. Water had to be fetched from between 50 and 60 yards away. There was an earth closet down the garden.

Her husband's wage, she told me, was paid fortnightly and out of it had to come insurance 1/7 a week, coal 2/10 a week in the summer and more in the winter, boot and clothing club 3/-, so there wasn't much left for food for the eight of them,

even when the 14-year-old boy's shillings came in.

"Butcher's meat," she said, "we can only get up to between 6/- and 7/- for the fortnight. The rest of the meat is pieces of bacon for boiling. But we grow vegetables in the garden and that helps a lot."

Her man, by the way, went through the last war and was gassed. Another thing this remarkable woman said was : "I used to think that I would have my man working on anything else but farming, but now I think it's the surest thing. It's regular. We should be happy enough if we had a bit more to do on. The children don't get clothed as I would like them to be. I make nearly all their clothes out of things I have given to me, and I get praised for keeping them clean and tidy."

There was an adventure coming for this family. The farmer had built a new cottage with electric light, a combined bathroom and lavatory, hot and cold water, four bedrooms, a living-room and a back kitchen. They were shortly going to move into it, and the comment of the 11-year-old boy was : "I'm going to live in the bath."

A plain and simple story, but these, like scores of thousands of their fellows, are plain and simple people who produce food for others and get insufficient themselves.

(2) He was one of the great army of men who for years have been leaving the land for other work at the rate of from anything between 15,000 and 20,000 a year. He was early middle-aged and

worked on the land for years until he swopped his farm wage of 35/- a week for a labourer's job—aerodrome building.

"Every week now," he said, "I bring home between £3 5s. and £3 10s., so why should I go back to the land? Even the 'dole' now for my family and me would be 33/- a week. The work I do these days is no harder than the work I used to do, so why shouldn't I stay this side of the hedge shovelling concrete and doing such-like jobs for twice the money that I'd get for working in the field on the other side of the hedge?"

(3) On the way down into Shropshire I came across a man who just couldn't puzzle out why he produced mutton and could only get little bits of it for himself, his wife and his children to eat. He was perched on a farm cart while the horse clip-clopped its leisurely way along a lovely little lane.

With the unfailing courtesy of his kind he pulled up when I waved to him, told me that he had worked twenty years on the same farm, that he had a wife and two dependent children and that his wage was 35/- a week.

A little magisterially he asked: "What's all this about?" When I told him I would like all farm workers to have a minimum standard rate of £2 a week he remarked: "Then damned good luck to you, if you'll excuse me," and proceeded, a little hesitantly, to open up as follows: "I had three years in the war. When I came out of the army I got a job on this farm at 46s. a week. That went down

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to 30/-. Now the union has gradually pushed it up to 35/-. I'm a shepherd, and that means overtime which comes to £3 10s., but to get that I have to work seven days a week. We can't go up to no flash meat meals, I can tell you, and my wife don't have a very fat time. Sometimes it seems sort of funny to me that though I'm bringing the sheep up we can't buy the mutton. By the time it comes back past our door on the butcher's cart it's gone past our pocket."

. . . . .

(4) In a Cheshire village two complete contrasts were chatting together. One was a grizzled veteran with russet and wrinkled skin and twinkling eyes who has spent 50 years as a farm worker. The other was a lad of 19 who said he loved being on the land.

When I asked the veteran what was his first man's wage he threw back his experienced old head, laughed, and said : "It was so damned small I can't remember." Then he explained as follows : "I used to be 'hired out' for a certain sum for a year, and during that year the farmer I hired myself to gave me grub and somewhere to sleep. At the end of the year I usually got about £4, and then I had to pay up for the odds and ends of clothes or perhaps a pair of boots that I had bought during the year. If anybody finished up the twelve months with 15/- before going off to hire himself to somebody else he thought he must be a cleverish short of chap. Mind you there wasn't any money coming along during the year, and if I wanted a bit of baccy I had to 'sub' off the farmer."

This old man could do anything on a farm. He got £2 a week because he looked after pigs and was paid extra for that. The farmer gave him potatoes and a few rabbits.

Then the 19-year-old lad spoke up. He was "tidied" for the evening, was bright-eyed, and looked full of life and eagerness. He gloried in the fact that already he was a horseman and was trusted with the welfare of two horses in the summer and three in the winter. He went on the farm at 14, and because he was good he got 30/- a week. He worked from 6 o'clock in the morning until 5 in the evening, and in the winter he had to stay with his horses, feeding them, rubbing them down, grooming them until 7 o'clock.

This hard-working, independent-minded young fellow, the like of whom are worth their weight in gold to the English countryside, said: "I like it all right and it suits me." Asked what he thought he would be getting in two or three years' time, he replied with the sublime confidence of youth: "I will make my own bargain. I demanded 6/- a week rise last year and got it."

The farmer let him carry a gun, so he shot rabbits and sold some of them in the village. "It suits me," he repeated, and added: "But I do reckon there ought to be a bit more money and then I shouldn't ever worry about the town."

But much as he loves the land, much as he loves his horses, much as he loves going round the fields after the rabbits, the odds are heavy that one day he will love a girl, want to marry her and build a home. Then he will "worry about the town" if there isn't that "bit more money". He will want



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a decent cottage, reasonable transport facilities, a clean and healthy school for his children. And if he does not get them he, a very fine type of young agricultural worker, will follow the example of many thousands of others and go off the land to the land's great suffering.

. . . . .

Why is it necessary to recount these things? There are two reasons. It would be sheer folly to claim that our British democratic system, so far as it has progressed, has produced perfection. As has been stated already, British Labour is fighting not only defensively but offensively, not only to hold, but to gain.

British Labour does not wish to hide the evils that still exist, and that are crying out for the remedy that Hitlerism would deny.

It may possibly be argued that the recounting of such stories as those described above is "unwise". But why? British Labour is not represented by an army of ostriches hiding their heads in the sand. British Labour knows, perhaps better than anybody else, not only the evils that remain, but the remedies that may be applied. The worst of the rural cottages may not be typical, but there are many like them and despite all the work and the campaigning that has been done there are still thousands of their counterparts in the slums of the towns and cities

—even in some of the cathedral cities. On the other side of the account there is the inspiring work of large and small municipalities which have cleared disease-breeding slums out of the centres of their communities, and replaced them either by modern, well-planned, light and airy flats with faultless sanitation or by well-planned housing estates on the outskirts. There is also the more slowly progressing work of rural re-housing. It would be senseless not to recognise the work that has been done, but the advance has not been fast enough. The second Labour Government (that of 1929) forced through an Act that would have provided 40,000 additional rural houses. When its opponents succeeded Labour in Government even that emergency programme was to all intents and purposes sabotaged.

But go round rural Britain to-day, a rural Britain that contains as many contrasting beauties and enticements as half a dozen other European countries put together, and what do you find? In many of the country districts enlightened local authorities have attended to the village housing problem with trim, comfortable, electrically-lit cottages with water laid on and proper sanitary accommodation. The loveliness of the countryside remains, but it is being gradually enhanced by the knowledge that the men and women who

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inhabit it, who till the earth and add to its glories have travelled far, but not far enough from the conditions of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

Not far enough, that is the point. They are no longer afraid of the "bosses", as they were not so very long ago. They have won what, to their forebears, would have seemed an unimaginable stretch of liberty. And now, these grand men and women, close to nature, tough of fibre, great-hearted, and with a straight and undeviating simplicity of outlook have realised that the measure of liberty they have won is being threatened. It has taken generations for them to get the basis of justice and opportunity.

In the meadows, the barns, the corn-fields ; on the hillsides where there are glimpses of the wider horizons ; under the old trees that ring the village greens ; grouped around the small benches of the inns ; gossiping across the paths that divide the cottage gardens or debating in the little halls where meetings are held, they have been discussing with a swift perception that is often belied by a cautious deliberation of speech not only the preservation of what has been achieved, but the preservation of the opportunity of achieving more.

That is what is going on in the villages and

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the hamlets. Opportunity is the keyword of the countryside. The men and women of the land have adapted to higher and nobler purposes the old jingo phrase: "What we have we hold", and have added to it aspiration and determination that the past shall not be betrayed, the present sacrificed, or the future jeopardised.

## PART IV

### HOW LABOUR WOULD SAFEGUARD LIBERTY

THE British Labour Movement is concerned to preserve British liberties, and to protect the liberties of other peoples. There is no hatred in its heart against peoples. But it opposes evil principles and evil systems of government. I have endeavoured to prove that, whatever its opponents might have thought of it in the past, whatever prejudices they may have nursed, it is undeniable that British Labour is democratic to the core, and will use all its power to maintain the democratic way of life.

But to resist the power of dictatorship, democratic methods must be applied to the full. Nazi leaders hold that democracy is outworn ; that at its best it is clumsy, slow, uncertain, and inefficient in action. These charges are superficial. Normally, the process of democratic discussion, of give and take, of reconsideration and final decision takes time. It is the essence of democracy that the common will should prevail, that the minority should be heard, but that the majority should decide, after the issue has been thrashed out, in a way which does not trample down the

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conscience of the few. Democratic organisation is, by its very nature, deliberative. When life is normal it takes its own time to form its conclusions. When its decision is taken those concerned abide by it until it is changed.

It is the claim of dictatorship that it acts swiftly and without hesitation. This war must prove that democracy in times of stress, when fundamental principles are at stake, can also act surely and swiftly.

In the present struggle democracy must prove itself effective in action, not only to uphold our own faith, but in order to sustain or re-establish the faith of those whose liberties have been taken away by threats and force.

There must be equality of sacrifice and fundamental equality of service, from each in his own sphere. In the House of Commons the day before the outbreak of war, speaking on the Bill to widen the scope of compulsory military service, I said :

“Men are to be taken into the Army. At the moment large numbers are already under arms and at their stations, prepared to make the supreme sacrifice. In our view—and this is no new view, because it was expressed in the last Great War—that spirit must be applied to all our activities and all our people. I ask that profiteering should be stopped. He who seeks personal gain in these times is a traitor to his country. I speak strongly on this

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matter, but not in any controversial spirit when I say that on this side we will not tolerate the creation of war fortunes this time. I would rather the rot was stopped now than try to filch part of their ill-earned wealth. I would go further and ask that as much as possible of the burden of expenditure should be borne now, and that we should as far as practicable pay as we go, rather than leave a crushing and intolerable burden of debt to be borne by an impoverished people facing the biggest problems of reconstruction we have ever had to face in our history.

"We must conserve our resources as far as possible. We must, if need be, go short of many things now, in order that we may, when this dreadful catastrophe is over, grapple with economic and social problems the magnitude of which, at this time, we can hardly understand. It is important that our resources should be as strong as possible.

"I ask, also, in order that we should conserve our resources now, that every effort should be made to control the prices of the essential supplies. Any profiteering in the necessities of life falls most heavily upon the poor. There are many to-day wishful to evacuate themselves, but they have no resources. The well-to-do have already evacuated themselves in large numbers—and I am not complaining about that, because the fewer people in London who are not wanted the better, in these difficult times. On the backs of the poor the heaviest burdens really fall. It would be unfor-  
givable, I think, if early and most effective steps were not taken to keep the cost of the necessities of life at a reasonable level."

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The application of these principles—the full utilisation of the nation's resources, and the full co-operation of all according to their opportunities, requires fuller examination.

Modern war is a very elaborate business. It is not only concerned with the horrible work of human destruction. Man- and material-power has to be organised and directed from peace to war channels. Trade has to be redistributed, as far as possible, so that the enemy shall be deprived of essential war materials.

As a result of the development of air warfare, evacuation has become a serious problem—one which gives rise to a thousand different questions because the social, economic and family life of the nation is profoundly affected, and all kinds of new arrangements have to be made.

Food, formerly needed in the vulnerable areas, is now required in the reception areas. Questions of the adequacy of the water supply and sewage disposal, of various social services, including, of course, schooling for children, arise, together with a host of other questions.

I could go on elaborating the ways in which war tears the whole life of a nation out of its ordinary workaday channels. But I hope I have said enough to show that war is a vast, complicated process, involving very far-reaching changes



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and calling for even more far-reaching changes to cope with the situation.

In my view, even in peace-time, disorganised, haphazard, and unrelated activity is an indefensible national waste. In war-time it is a national crime.

In peace-time, we permit—or we have permitted up to now—wide disparities of income. People, without themselves making any exertion or performing any useful work, enjoy large incomes, and employ in personal service considerable numbers of people who, in a properly organised system of society, would be more usefully employed. This, even in the piping times of peace, is a national loss.

Resources are wasted in luxury production which would be far better devoted to improving the standard of life of the poor.

Again, I could go on with further illustrations. But it is clear that our peace-time economic system is honeycombed with grave defects.

How, we may ask, can we expect to face the crushing responsibilities of war with economic machinery ill-devised to serve national, as distinct from personal, ends?

There is only one way. That is by the complete sacrifice of personal and sectional interests to the national purpose.

The reason why totalitarian States may be

formidable economic fighting-machines—though they may not have dynamic force behind them—is that the dictator exercises supreme power and directs every aspect of the national life to serve his purpose.

Capitalist States, in spite of much that has been said of their internal solidarity, do not show that same strong unity. Apart from any other considerations, they do not possess that completely decentralised direction that the dictator enjoys. Those controlling the economic system do not always see eye to eye. Different economic interests come into conflict. One man's meat is another man's poison, and the immediate economic interests of sections of the capitalist class are not always identical.

Moreover, whatever may be said of the dictator, he has ambitions which are not merely economic. He drinks the intoxicating cup of power—political, social, economic and international. He is moved by ideas and emotions designed to impose his will on those with whom he is connected.

Self-interest, or even "enlightened capitalism", tinged with humanitarian feeling, cannot battle with a logical ideology or with the passionate fervour of the dictator. Long-sighted employers nowadays know that the proper conduct of industry depends on orderly negotiations with

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the trade unions. They would be the first to admit the part which, through reasonable discussion and argument, the unions can play in economic development.

The dictator sweeps away discussion. He abolishes employers' organisations. He destroys the free trade unions, burgles their funds, and puts their active leaders and members in concentration camps.

What is needed when democracy fights totalitarianism is an economic organisation as definite in its purpose, as swift in its decision, and more effective in operation than anything that dictatorship can produce.

Put bluntly, the truth is that in these days only Socialist organisation can meet dictatorship organisation.

Socialist organisation means that personal interests and ambitions must be subordinated to the public good. It must reflect and operate what public opinion demands.

It is the Government's duty to represent the free spirit of the people. This is the real strength of active democracy against dictatorship. The free spirit can be expressed only by the Government, as representing the State, in co-operation with those who have special knowledge and experience of the questions at issue.

Industry and commerce comprise two different

sets of the community—those who provide the money, and those who do the work. I am not primarily concerned with the former. As regards the latter, they also fall into two broad classes, though they overlap. The first class consists of the “executives”—to use an American expression. They are the technicians and administrators, whose services are indispensable.

The second is what is called “labour”. It is equally indispensable. It contributes not only muscle and brawn, but brains and skill as well.

It is the effective co-operation of these agencies, subject to broad State policy, that is essential to economic efficiency.

To some readers this may seem very theoretical. In fact, it is vital to-day. It is urgent, in this great struggle, that the whole of our material resources should be mobilised behind the national cause.

The only way to do this is the Socialist way—not, perhaps, in every detail as we have thought it out in days of peace, but in principle and spirit. War may alter the method, but it cannot alter the Socialist purpose, which is to bend all our national resources to public ends.

The overpowering public aim to-day is the destruction of Hitler’s menace to liberty. That can be done only by conserving every ounce of national energy for the supreme purpose of keeping freedom.

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Nothing short of that will suffice. So far, the steps which have been taken have been tentative, cautious and only too often reluctant. But if, as is vitally necessary, we are to concentrate our maximum economic power so as to safeguard civilian needs, and to secure the effective prosecution of the war, further steps in the direction of socialisation and public control will become necessary.

I do not argue thus because I wish to exploit the war situation for the purpose of obtaining the policy for which the Labour Party stands. I do so because I believe that whether we are thinking in terms of war production or peace output the basic principles of Socialism ought to be applied in the interests of national efficiency.

There have been charges regarding the bureaucratic nature of some of the controls instituted since the beginning of the present war. I have myself in the House of Commons and in the Press made my protest against bureaucratic methods, which old-fashioned opponents of Socialism confused with Socialism.

What the Labour Party desires least of all is officialdom and bumbledom. It is earnestly desirous of mobilising our material resources, and harnessing all our knowledge, skill, experience and brains for the utilisation of those resources with a view to the optimum production

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of goods and services in support of the national effort. By that way alone can Britain make its needed contribution in these days when resources must be properly used, and when wastefulness must be ruthlessly eliminated.

Some of our liberties have had, I know, to be temporarily suspended during hostilities. Much-prized freedoms have had, as it were, to be put into cold storage. Powers (some of them almost as dictatorial in their scope, if fully used, as are to be found in Totalitarian States) have had to be accorded to the Government in order to ensure that unity of control and swiftness of action essential for the successful prosecution of our war efforts.

This has, not unnaturally, caused a certain amount of misgiving among lovers of liberty who fear the powers may be both misused and difficult to regain when the emergency ends. It has also caused a good deal of jubilation to persons at the opposite extreme who see in it a proof that democracy is incapable of functioning properly directly a crisis arises.

Both, in my view, entirely misread the situation. They forget that the emergency powers have been given voluntarily and in a constitutional way, are for a limited objective and for a definite period only and, in addition, can be withdrawn at any time by popular will if they are

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misused. The fact that they have been given proves not the breakdown of democratic methods but their superiority. They demonstrate a strength, adaptability and elasticity not possessed by dictatorships. The Labour movement has, therefore, acquiesced in the granting of these powers to the Government with its eyes open, knowing that, great though they may appear to be, they are not as large as they sound and are in any event subject to the overriding authority of Parliament at any time and still leave the House of Commons supreme as the final arbiter.

The House of Commons has not resigned, and in the view of the Labour movement, should not resign, its functions in favour of any War Cabinet, however representative it may appear to be of the nation as a whole. In the first days of the war, Labour took the view that Parliament must meet regularly, for Parliament is not only the national sounding-board, it is the symbol of those democratic rights for which the war is being waged and the instrument by which our present liberties are to be safeguarded. The regular meetings of Parliament were secured, and, by common consent, Parliament has played its proper part since war began.

At a bound it re-established its position as a sensitive and virile assembly truly reflecting the mind of the people. Legislation necessary to

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the conduct of the war was introduced with commendable promptitude. Lessons learned through bitter experience in the last war have been remembered and certain steps taken to control essential supplies of men, food and material.

The measures taken so far by the Government do not go far enough. They leave much too vast a field still uncontrolled. It is essential, if this war is to be fought to a speedy and victorious conclusion, that more drastic measures be taken both to use to the full the vast resources available and to prevent the exploitation of the great mass of the people by the vested interests at present in control of those resources.

In the past the workers have always been war's first and greatest casualties. They have not only been called upon to bear the brunt of the actual combat in the field but have found their standard of living and the social services drastically cut down.

The Labour movement is resolved that this shall not happen this time if it can prevent it. And in taking this line it believes that it speaks for the overwhelming majority. It believes that it is not only morally wrong to penalise the economically weak in this way, it is materially short-sighted. For it is essential that the physical standard of the people should not be lowered or



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the stamina of the rising generation undermined.

It is at present impossible to forecast the duration of the war or to hazard a guess at its probable cost. It may well be that it will be a long-drawn-out struggle which will strain the resources of the Empire to their utmost limit. That time, however, has not yet arrived and we all hope it never will. If it does, quite plainly many things, now held tenaciously, may have to be temporarily relinquished. I am positive that if the worst does happen, the workers of this country will willingly shoulder with stout hearts, any additional sacrifices that they may have to bear.

They will bear them all the more cheerfully if in the meantime the Government convinces them by its actions that it intends to mobilise the whole economic resources available both for the efficient prosecution of the war and for the common good.

It is the considered view of the Labour movement that this can only be done by an immediate and far-reaching extension of public control in industry and finance.

Some people, I know, though I believe a diminishing number, are frightened by the phrase "public control". They realise that all is not well at present and are anxious to see

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the national resources more broadly enjoyed but are fearful of the remedy proposed.

The Labour movement is perfectly alive to the grave dangers to personal liberty inherent in unchecked bureaucratic State control and has no desire to see it imposed. Nor, I may add, is there anything in its programme which should lead anyone to believe that it seeks anything less than the widest possible personal freedom for all.

Liberty, however, is a much used, and sometimes, a much abused word. No word is more capable of wider variations of interpretation. To one individual liberty may mean nothing more than being free to do as he likes in his spare time ; to his neighbour nothing less than complete freedom from restraints of any kind. To some, religious freedom is all that matters : to others the soul means little, give them political liberty and they are content. What is liberty to one man may be the reverse of it to his employee. To the Victorian factory owner it meant freedom to engage whom he pleased, when he pleased and how he pleased, though to his workers this spelled serfdom not liberty. Hitler is fighting this war for liberty to do as he will with small nations.

It is, therefore, essential that we should come to a clear understanding as to just what we mean when we speak of liberty.

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It is obvious, to begin with, that in the modern complex world we live in there can be no such thing as absolute liberty. The freedom of action possible to Robinson living alone on his desert island could not be permitted Mr. Crusoe living, say, in the centre of Birmingham. Directly men began to live together in groups, restrictions of one sort or another became inevitable if the group was to continue as a corporate body. And the fact is that, although the conception of liberty as a desirable thing in itself has grown down the centuries, and although to-day the belief that it is the prime business of Governments to accord it in the widest possible measure is now universally accepted as axiomatic by the Democracies, the curious thing is that, the wider the bounds have been set for the people as a whole, the narrower they have perforce become for the individual. Individuals in this country, to take a simple example, are no longer allowed to take the law into their own hands. Loaded pistols are not only no longer needed by the civilian every time he leaves home ; it is definitely forbidden to carry them without a licence. Order to-day is kept by the police and disputes adjusted in the courts. We have lost one liberty—the liberty to kill our man—but who is there who will not agree that in doing so we have collectively and individually, achieved a greater

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liberty? The State, acting for all, has replaced the individual, acting for himself.

The political struggles in this country during the past hundred years have been almost exclusively confined to efforts, most of them successful, to take from one or other section exclusive privileges previously enjoyed and to vest those rights in the State itself or in a public or local authority. And it is true to say that in no case where this happened would the majority desire to see such rights handed back.

As far back as 1919 a public enquiry established the fact that four-fifths of the principal industries within the United Kingdom were under the control of syndicates or combines and, since then, this movement towards trustification has continued. To-day we find that firms within an industry have not only amalgamated, but separate industries have found it expedient to interlock in order to survive, with the result that often monopolistic powers are wielded by comparatively few men.

The trustification of industry and finance was an inevitable step in their evolution. Labour submits that it is not right that such enormous power should be left in the hands of a comparatively few persons. It creates an intolerable situation which no self-respecting democracy should allow. Labour advocates that the next

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step should be taken, and the great basic industries and services transferred to public control.

Of recent years the movement towards the public control of industry has been greatly accelerated. In fact we have not only seen Conservative Governments, historically opposed, on principle, to State intervention in industry, initiating legislation imposing such control but imposing it often with the consent of "big business" itself.

The workers themselves demand a much greater share both in the management of the industry in which they work and in its product. More and more they are refusing to accept as inevitable the role allotted them under the present order of Society, and are asking why, in spite of the enormous advances made by invention, science, and discovery, and the vast power for cheap and abundant production these have brought, they do not enjoy security of employment and of high wages.

The fact is the world is entering a new era. This might be, if we will allow it to be, an age of leisure and plenty. All that is needed is a new approach to old problems; a conscious planning of national resources to the end that each may be served.

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I realise to the full the complexities of the problems which would have to be confronted, many of them baffling in normal times but doubly so at the close of a war which will have exhausted and impoverished friend and foe alike. I do, however, believe that when hostilities cease, the work of rebuilding Britain on just and secure foundations can be begun despite all difficulties, and begun with all the more certainty because the war itself will have broken down many present prejudices and predisposed all classes of society to treat with sympathy and good will any effort, by whomsoever made, to re-establish the social and economic order on better lines.

Reorganisation of the economic structure along the lines of public ownership and control, which Labour advocates, would not be based on any cut-and-dried formula, to be applied to all industries alike. The Labour movement is as concerned as anyone else to see that the measures adopted are capable of achieving the end in view with the minimum of dislocation, and of functioning with the maximum of efficiency when in operation.

The order in which industries and services should be dealt with must, of course, depend on what is the most urgent and practicable at the time. In Labour's Immediate Programme, still

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current, four major measures, covering Finance, Land, Transport, and Coal and Power, are promised during the next Labour Government's first period of office with power, and it may very well be that war experience and war-time control of industries and services will determine the order of priority.

Labour aims are simple. It accepts the full implication of democracy and seeks to see social equality and the widest possible personal liberty established. It believes, however, that true liberty, equality and democracy can never be achieved so long as the majority are in economic subjection to a small minority. It is convinced that the law of co-operation is not only best from the point of view of morals but yields the best material results.

## PART V

### AFTER THE WAR, WHAT ?

BRITISH Labour has its roots deep in our national history. Its spirit goes back to the days of Wat Tyler and later of Cromwell. It remembers Peterloo and the Luddites over a century ago. The greatest of its leaders were deeply religious men, nurtured in the Nonconformist faith. Men and women of spirit, whatever their views on the ebb and flow of current political events, if they believe in the fundamentals of individual, social and international righteousness, must realise the strength of Labour's human and moral appeal.

Organised Labour everywhere has been subjected to oppression. Where, as in Germany, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, its institutions have been destroyed, these tragedies have not destroyed the democratic spirit. When the flames of freedom are quenched here and there they burn the more brightly and steadily elsewhere. No dictator can extinguish them. Man's goal is freedom. It may be defined clumsily and imperfectly, but as the people tread the path of experience, the human aim becomes clearer



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with every new achievement. Every defeat intensifies its determination and gives it new wisdom. Every direct challenge clarifies and sharpens its fundamental purpose.

The war has come about because man's will to freedom has been challenged as never before ; because the very basis of human civilisation is threatened. This will to freedom is unconquerable, and will provide the real rock on which the ship of Dictatorship will founder.

The fundamental issue is a moral issue. That is why we fight. Labour in the British Commonwealth has no imperial aims. It will not lend itself to such aims. Neither will it degrade this crusade into a scramble for world markets. Its determination is to keep its spiritual values, to retain those achievements which have widened the bounds of human freedom, and to assist in creating those essential conditions of civilised life in which alone the spirit of freedom, in all its manifestations, can thrive.

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, whatever course the present struggle may take, whatever shortcomings may come to light, whatever difficulties may arise, to keep ever before our eyes the high purpose for which we embarked on the crusade.

Though mighty masses of metal may hurtle

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through the air, this war is a war of nerves. It is, indeed, much more—it is a war of wills, a war between the will of the dictator on the one hand, and the will of common people of all lands on the other, to cherish, uphold and strengthen the soul of liberty.

It is the task of leaders of democratic thought and opinion, during the coming days, to keep burning brightly the flame of man's endeavours to escape from servitude and suppression, and to win through to that freedom for all which makes for human dignity and moral strength.

When at the end of the present hostilities, gunfire has died down, when our bombers have ceased their deadly work, when the Navy has relinquished its relentless search for enemy craft, and when an Armistice has been called, the stage will be set for the next act in the drama of human history.

The act which preceded the present conflict was an unfolding story of attempts to undermine international authority, to change frontiers without proper consultation, to submit peoples to tyranny against their wills, and to establish a rule of force which threatened the bases of democracy, and would, if left unchecked, have strangled the spirit of liberty everywhere.

On November 11th, 1918, after four and a

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quarter years of war, there was an Armistice. It did not herald, as we had hoped, the end of armed strife in the world. A new generation in Britain, nurtured in a growing democratic faith, and a new generation in Germany pitilessly dragooned from early youth into Nazi discipline and subservience, were in conflict on September 3rd, 1939, nearly twenty-one years later ; the former backed and strengthened by their fathers who fought in the last war, the latter bereft through murders, concentration camps, and exile, of the continued existence in Germany of Socialist thought, and of the full help of the previous generation.

The titanic struggle has not yet been fully joined. It began years ago as a war of nerves, when Hitler sought to terrorise Europe by threats, and succeeded in enlarging the frontiers of Germany and enslaving millions of people. A second phase opened when he attacked Poland, and forced Britain and France into war. This aspect of the struggle has yet to be written. But one day the war will cease, and there will be another Armistice.

We shall then be faced with the task of creating a new world. Before then we must be clear in our minds as to the foundations we mean to lay. It is obviously impossible at this stage, even if it were practicable and desirable, to do more than

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lay down basic principles which must be followed in fulfilment of the great objective for which the war was waged.<sup>1</sup>

No man to-day can envisage the map of Europe and the world at the end of the struggle. No man can foresee who may be belligerents before it ceases. Whilst it is vital that the peace should be peace for the world, its details are not capable of formulation now.

The primary duty in the days and months after the war will be to see that the foundations of a new order are well and truly laid, so that later a worthy edifice may be built to enshrine the hopes of the world.

But in order that we may see things in their true perspective, and look out on a shattered Europe with eyes undimmed by hatred and prejudice, we must avoid breeding unworthy emotions. It is vital that we should eschew "hymns of hate", and fomenting base passions.

It is equally clear that we should not descend to such depths of depravity in the realm of "propaganda" as the enemy has already done, with his crude and disgusting debauchery of language and blatant misrepresentation. It would be criminal if we were to degrade what

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<sup>1</sup> See Mr. C. R. Attlee's statement on "Labour's Peace Aims" (published by the Labour Party, price 1d.) which sets forth in clear and admirable terms the conditions and principles of peace.

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I conceive to be a great crusade, in which the modern democratic St. George will slay the ages-old dragon of oppression and tyranny, into an "all-in" wrestling bout.

It would be an unpardonable offence if Britain and France were to waver and the high purpose of their peoples be deflected into imperialist and selfish courses which would demean our cause.

The final aim of the struggle is simple in conception, though it may be difficult to fulfil. When mankind is exhausted by slaughter and agony and enormous material sacrifices, the spirit of freedom must prevail. There must be an imperishable peace, built on granite—unsailable and eternal. It must be so deeply rooted in justice, so fair in its operation, so hopeful for the future development of the life and happiness of mankind, that it will be unchallengeable.

I cannot draw a close distinction between the national and international aspects of the future peace. The guiding principles must be the same. I quote words which will never be forgotten. The circumstances were entirely different. They were uttered after a civil war almost three-quarters of a century ago. To-day there is a Great War, and the life of mankind has become more complicated, and yet Abraham Lincoln's well-known and noble words can well be applied to our objectives to-day.

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In his short, pregnant and noble address delivered at the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg on November 19th, 1863, he said : "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." That nation passed through the throes of the American Civil War. Lincoln went on to say, referring to the dead, "It is for us the living . . . to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

On March 9th, 1865, Lincoln spoke these words in another famous speech :

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop

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of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, then, as was said, three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Lincoln spoke against tyranny and injustice and for freedom, however heavy the price to be paid. He spoke for those who had carried the burden of the fray. He spoke for those who were entitled to inherit the fruits of their suffering. Times have changed. The present conflict is on a gigantic scale. But the issues are fundamentally the same. A year or two before Lincoln became President, he wrote: "As I would not be a slave so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

This is the issue which confronts us to-day—nationally and internationally, in all its political, economic and social implications. It is freedom at home and freedom abroad. Liberty cannot

## WHY WE FIGHT

be conferred on people. It is not a gift to be bestowed. It is a prize to be won. The war will remove obstacles and create the conditions through which liberty may be claimed and achieved.

When men of those nations directly involved in the war, elected by the people, sit round the conference-table to face the future, the first thing which I think ought to be considered is the scope of their discussions. In my view, all States should be invited. This Great War, though at present waged in Europe, and on the high seas and in the air by European Powers, is the "test case" for humanity, and mankind as a whole is entitled to be brought into consultation and co-operation.

In other words, the Peace Conference should be a World Conference called together by the belligerent Powers to discuss the whole range of human problems. It is true that European issues may appear to be more immediate, but the triumph of the rule of law and freedom must be world-wide. Europe cannot be the watch tower of peace everywhere. A settlement of European problems does not settle mankind's problems. The fester of domination outside Europe, as, for example, in the Far East, must not be allowed to poison the mainstream of the world's life.



## AFTER THE WAR, WHAT?

Peace, like liberty, is one and indivisible. Peace with liberty is the predominant issue in the world. Liberty also is one and indivisible. The war is being fought because it has been recognised that the destruction of the freedom of one people not merely threatens but actually impairs and undermines the freedom of all.

Once the campaign of tyranny and suppression was launched against Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, every small nation within reach of the dictator's mailed fist has been deprived of its freedom of action. Its mind has been forcibly twisted out of its normal course, and its energies have been diverted from peaceful pursuits to war purposes. The great democracies of the west—Britain and France—suffered a similar experience. They had to face colossal expenditure on armaments, and utilise resources for warlike ends which public opinion was more and more determined should be devoted to social purposes. The result was that long-overdue reforms to which the people are properly entitled have been postponed, and, it may be, imperilled, because of impoverishment in the years to come.

Since the rise of Hitler, therefore, great and small nations alike, against their desires, have been driven by the force of circumstances created by him to postpone their hopes, and to dissipate their resources. Liberty, therefore, is indivisible.

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A threat to the liberty of one nation by a stronger Power which may nurse ambitions, is, I repeat, a threat to all nations.

Consequently, the peace must be such as will ensure for all time that the way of life of one nation should not be menaced by force. It is for each people to work out its own salvation. It is not for any man—whatever genius he may possess—to dictate to any nation, any race, any religion, or, indeed, any class in society, what life it shall lead.

It follows, therefore, that henceforth no State shall be able to use force against another State. There is, however, only one way to secure this end. All nations of honest purpose must agree that they will stand together to resist any military attack made upon one of them. The only way to do this effectively is not through national armed forces, but through an international force to which they all make their contribution.

States may wish to keep police and militia to preserve the peace within their territories according to law. To that there can be no objection. But the present war will have failed, if after the Peace Treaty, States are permitted to—or may by bluff, bluster or deception—arm themselves to the teeth.

Disarmament, therefore, must inevitably be a major problem of the peace discussions, because

## AFTER THE WAR, WHAT?

we are convinced it is an essential condition of the real goal—the establishment of freedom. But it must not be merely a scaling down of State armaments. It must mean the transfer of power—and power to take action against an aggressor—to an international authority.

This involves a sacrifice of sovereignty by States. Such sacrifices have been made in the past. Otherwise there would not be a body of international law. That law has been ineffective in times of stress because there was no power of enforcement. In war-time it is defied. When, after this present struggle is ended, and the world fashions a new international code, its fulfilment will depend on international power, economic and military, which, in the last resort, will enforce the law.

Once that is established, two things follow. Firstly, force ceases to be an instrument of national policy, for no State dare use it. Secondly, frontiers will cease to be determined by strategical considerations. The boundaries of States will be determined by racial, religious, cultural and ancient historical associations. In these circumstances, it is right to expect that minorities of all kinds will be treated with tolerance and respect, for that is the essence of freedom.

If we rid the world of national armed forces, apart from such powers as may wish to become law-

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breakers, and therefore decline to join the comity of nations, then under the protection of law-abiding powers in concert, the nations will know that they can live in peace, for the authority of mankind will be strong enough to resist the depredations of any lawless power. Moreover, it must be made clear in the Peace Treaty that the relief of States from external physical pressure must involve the relief of minorities within States from pressure upon them to forgo the freedom of thought, expression and legitimate action which States themselves have been guaranteed, with their assent, by a super-national authority. Such freedom will enrich the world of the future.

Once the world is free from the ambition of mastery, backed by the use of force, the nations of the world in co-operation, through a representative world body will be able to rule the major destinies of mankind on democratic lines.

Such an organisation would be a new League of Nations, so planned as to bring in all States who regarded human progress and happiness as their primary aim.

It would control the internationalised police force, but it would work to make the exercise of that force unnecessary. Its fundamental object would be to unite the States of the world in the constructive tasks which face mankind as a

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whole. The more men can think together, though with differences of opinion, on common tasks, the less time they have to brood on those problems which create dissensions that lead to war.

And so there must be a world-wide confederation of peoples desirous of maintaining the moral law. Within that far-flung confederation there ought to be federal unions, close and more intimate friendships which will help cement the larger comradeship of mankind. The New World in the West has its own problems. Within Europe the Balkan peoples have their own problems ; so also have the Scandinavian peoples. There is room within a world confederation for federations and sub-federations of associated nations. There is a need, outside groupings based upon racial, political and cultural considerations, for economic federation which will widen the bounds of economic units of production and distribution.

We shall achieve true freedom through the spontaneous association of peoples for peaceful purposes under the wing of a world authority. Similar rights of association for minorities are, of course, essential. Freedom is one, but its rightful manifestations are multitudinous. Uniformity is not of the essence of freedom. Man's goal is freedom through diversity, each nation, each city, each individual enriching the world

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by the special contribution which each can make. We must not expect to build a "tidy" world. We must not seek to regiment all its varied activities into one goose-stepping march towards so-called "progress". We must rather ensure conditions of life and society which will enable the springs of freedom to bubble into active life. Having rid the world of the effective use of force, the world's natural resources must be made available for the world on fair terms. Through international co-operation, effort must be co-ordinated to secure that the material resources of the earth are used to the best advantage. It must be affirmed that the proper pride of the nations in their various achievements shall not be suppressed, that the lamp of free culture shall burn undimmed, and that mankind shall worship as its conscience dictates.

It is not part of my present purpose to enter upon a detailed discussion of ways and means of building a framework of human society within which these things can be. I am concerned only to show that to win the war we must win the peace, to insist that the war, having been undertaken for declared ends, our high purpose must be translated into a noble peace and carried into effect so far as human will—and goodwill—can be mobilised to march on, unafraid, towards a new era.

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If these things be true in the international sphere, they are equally true at home. I have tried to make it clear that British Labour's policy is governed by its passionate desire for social and economic justice for the common people, who, whilst providing the majority of those who by their franchise determine Britain's destinies, have been deprived of their rightful opportunities to equip themselves fully for their responsibilities as citizens and to enable them to play their part in the economic and social life of the nation.

Organised Labour prizes the results of its efforts. It knows that the workers will defend its achievements. It knows that Labour's progress abroad removes obstacles here. It knows equally well that Labour's success here inspires Labour's success abroad. British Labour is in the present great struggle because it is determined to maintain such liberties as it enjoys.

These achievements are cherished, not merely because of their intrinsic value, but because they represent the foundations of the larger opportunities which we must make ours, if the nation of the future is to be truly representative of the people, and if Britain's native genius and capacity are to be fully utilised for the general good.

During the progress of the war, the obvious social injustices ought to be remedied. Old age

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pensions, dependants' allowances, workmen's compensation, the lot of the lowly paid worker, the professional man and the shopkeeper fallen on evil days, ought to be a special care, as an earnest that the life of the people as a whole is at stake, and that what is the concern of one is the concern of all.

Moreover, even under the stress of war, with all the new responsibilities which fall upon the State, and the gigantic character of the scale of operations, touching the life and organisation of the nation at a thousand points, it is vital that some regard should be had to shaping the course of the national life now in accordance with the needs of the future. It is equally vital that even during these days of increasing intensity of war effort, thought should be given to the kind of country we hope to see after the war, just as we should think and plan for the kind of world we hope to attain. To the world, as a whole, Britain has further contributions to make, but they can only be made on the basis of her own example.

At the end of the struggle, when both land and sea are strewn with the wreckage of war, when large numbers of lives have been lost, when the remaining mountains of stocks of armaments have to be scrapped, when industries have to face the terrific task of changing over from war to



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entirely new peace conditions, the world will be both exhausted and impoverished.

It is undeniable that the end of the war will see numbers of private fortunes dissipated, well-to-do people harassed by their commitments, and even if active steps are taken now to prepare for the day, dislocation resulting in unemployment.

It may be that as the war continues, necessary housing schemes will be discontinued, and the progressive improvement of social services retarded. There will, therefore, be leeway to be made up in the public interest.

In other words, at the end of the war we shall look out on a bleak world, scarred by suffering and sacrifice. A pale, cold dawn will herald a new sunrise. But if we can face the bitter chill of that early morn, we shall live to see a glorious noonday sun.

As a nation we shall, I hope and believe, forswear the exploitation of individuals, rid ourselves of snobbery and social distinctions, and bend our will to the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. This will be a new crusade to fulfil the hopes of the present great struggle.

I have endeavoured in this book to tell the story of "Why we fight". When the bloodshed is ended, and the frightful bill has to be met, and when the sincerity of mankind, and the willingness

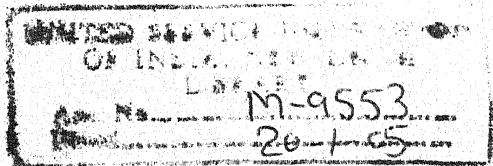
## WHY WE FIGHT

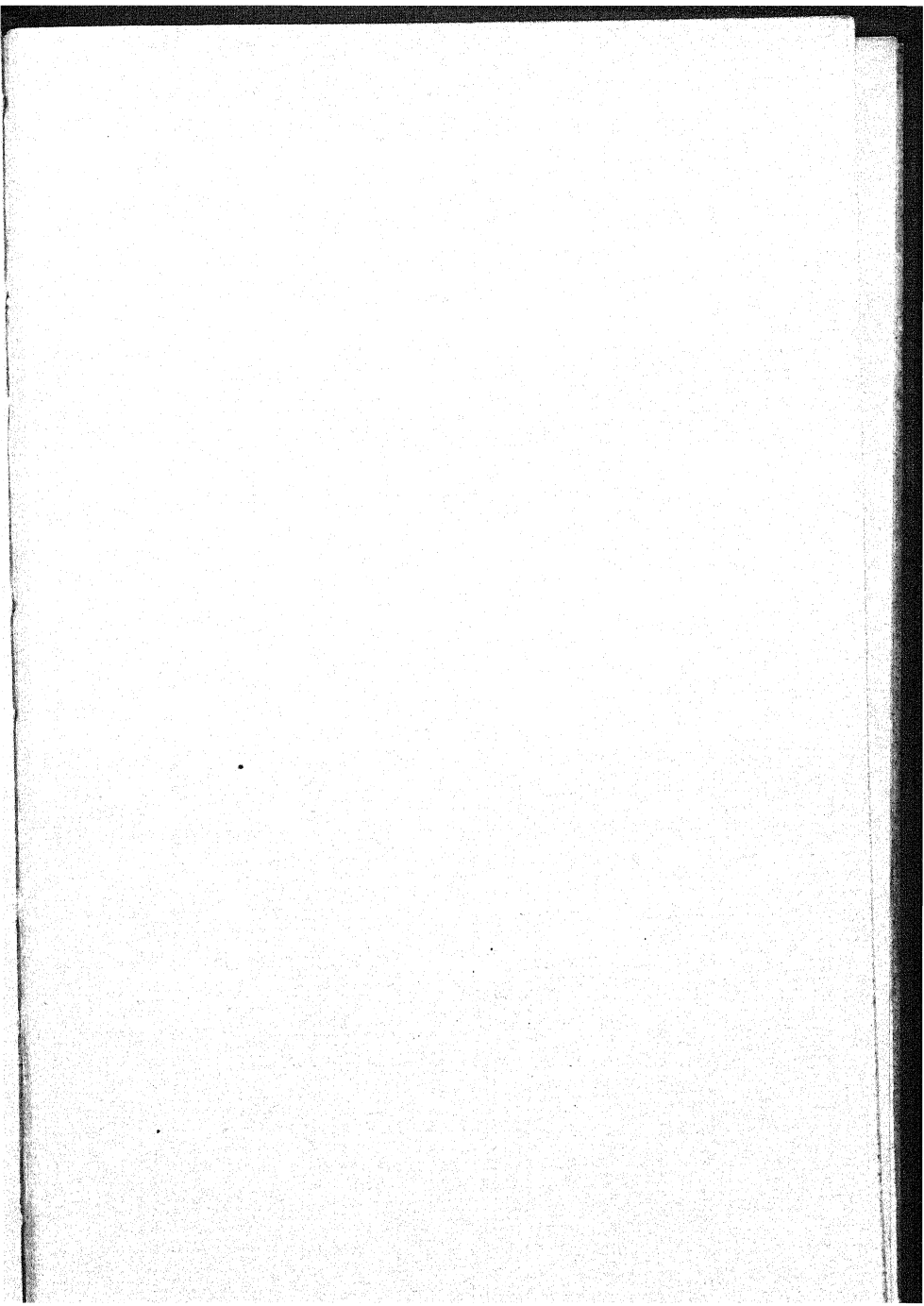
of those in social and economic authority to sacrifice pride of place, are challenged in order to end the ghastly and tragic story of tyranny, "Labour will fight on".

The struggle will be transferred from ships and planes and Maginot lines to the arena of reason and discussion. It will be a war of the spirit, in which organised Labour, having played its part in destroying a world-threatening dictatorship, will continue to liberate the ideals of freedom for the fulfilment of economic and social justice, at home and abroad.

In the coming days, Labour, the voice of the people, serene and confident in the future, "will fight on", so that its sacrifices shall not have been in vain, and so that its dreams shall come true.

THE END







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Author Greenwood, Arthur

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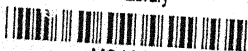
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